ROBERT BURTON'S ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY AND MENIPPEAN SATIRE, HUMANIST AND ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

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Robert Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy
and Menippean Satire, Humanist and English

What kind of book is the Anatomy of Melancholy? Scholars and critics, even those who read the Anatomy "as literature", do not agree upon this fundamental question. In his Anatomy of Criticism (1957), Northrop Frye designated the book a Menippean satire, but his lead has not been profitably followed.

An investigation into the history and poetics of Menippean satire in antiquity and the Renaissance supplies a literary context in which Burton's Anatomy may be situated. Various satires by Lucian, Seneca, and Horace, together with the apocryphal Hippocratic epistles, provided Burton with the models of character and plot in terms of which he framed his seriocomic fiction. In addition, the Renaissance recovery and imitation of Lucian and other classical Menippean authors, by Erasmus and More, among others, entailed the development of themes (for example, folly and utopia) and rhetorical techniques (parody and the rhetorical paradox) which were of further importance to Burton.

The Renaissance medical book and the Ramist technical treatise, with which the Anatomy is often placed, furnished Burton with discursive forms which he appropriated to his own purposes. Those purposes are the subject of his "satyricall preface", which offers a metafictional commentary on the treatise it precedes. The preface sets forth a series of oppositions at the same time as it collapses the conventional distinctions between them; the antic and the physician, the self and its masks, melancholy and laughter, reader and writer, quotation and originality, sobriety and fantasticality, cause and cure, come together at the limits of human sanity. The treatise proper dramatizes the interplay of these and other looking-glass pairs throughout its exhaustive survey of human life and knowledge.

At least one English author has grasped the seriocomic nature of Burton's book: Laurence Sterne, himself a student and writer of Menippean satire, whose borrowings from the Anatomy in Tristram Shandy demonstrate an appreciation of Burton's literary strategies.

For My Mother and Father

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- Burton, "The Author's Abstract of Melancholy"

CHAPTER ONE

THE ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY: WHAT IT IS

> Neglect, decay, must be the fate of all such ponderous eccentricities. And to smarten them up, and turn them out spick-and-span, radiant and raw, into the Forum of literature, is a doubtful sort of proceeding. They belong to the Cave, and Scholars are their natural friends and custodians. Leave them to the Scholars.

So T.E. Brown, the Manx poet, concluded a querulous essay on the Anatomy of Melancholy in The New Review in 1895.[1] Brown's essay is something of an eccentricity itself, but its author was not alone in the last century in suggesting that scholars keep to caves and that certain works of seventeenth-century English literature are best studied there in situ. The neo-lithic age of Burton criticism is perhaps past, but the Anatomy of Melancholy has yet to receive its proper pedestal in the forum of literature. Twentieth-century scholarship has by no means neglected the Anatomy, but when a recent study of Elizabethan and Jacobean melancholy need still entitle a chapter "The Anatomy of Melancholy as Literature"[2] -- as if to view the book from an unorthodox perspective -- it is apparent that there is still much for scholars to explore.

From the time the Anatomy was first published, at

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1. T.E. Brown, "Robert Burton, a Causerie", New Review XIII (1895), 257-66, p.266.

2. Bridget G. Lyons, Voices of Melancholy, London, 1971, chap. 5.

Oxford in 1621, to the present day, different readers have seen different things in it.[3] In fact, it has yet to be agreed just what sort of book Burton's Anatomy really is. For some, it belongs to seventeenth-century medical literature, just as Sir Thomas Browne's Pseudodoxia Epidemica belongs to the literature of early science. That the first to pronounce it "a great medical treatise... orderly in arrangement, serious in purpose" was Sir William Osler in 1914[4] need only mean that the obvious may long go unstated. Others, pointing to the mass of conventional wisdom supported by encyclopedic erudition in the Anatomy, have placed it with moralized expository books of the sort popular in Jacobean England. Still others, pointing to the same features, have located the Anatomy in a tradition of medieval and Renaissance encyclopedism. The nineteenth century saw it as a whimsical and rambling collection of anecdote and quotation, an attitude which provoked Osler's defence of the book's order and purpose. Recently, the Anatomy has been studied "as literature", though there has been no consensus as to what kind of literature it is.

When later ages vary so widely in their estimate of the essential nature of a book, it is especially interesting to canvass the opinions of its first readers. The first

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3. The historical pageant of Burton criticism has been comprehensively reviewed elsewhere and need not pass complete through these pages. v. Jean Robert Simon, Robert Burton et l'Anatomie de la Mélancolie, Paris, 1964, pp. 93-103.

4. Sir William Osler, "Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy", Yale Review, New Series III (1914), 251-71, p. 252.

known references to the Anatomy are by William Burton, Robert's elder brother, in his Description of Leicestershire (1622), and testify to no more than Robert's authorship of the book.[5] Although what is probably the next reference names neither Burton nor his work, it is unmistakable. In his Geography Delineated Forth of 1625, Nathaneal Carpenter of Exeter College, Oxford, writes:

> We have all a semel insanivimus, and as a learned man of this University seemes to maintaine, no man hath ever had the happiness to be exempted from this imputation.[6]

Of particular interest in this glance at Burton's "Satyricall Preface" is the context in which it is made. Coming to discuss the site of Oxford University, Carpenter relates that he is "surprized with a deep melancholy". Then, in a poem addressed to Mother Oxford, he bewails his failure to obtain advancement. He "never learned of thee/ The curious arts of thriving policy". Finally, recalling the conclusion of Burton's preface, he recants and declares that "as in a fit of phrensy have I spoken". He brings his melancholic fit to an end with the words quoted above. In

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5. William Burton, The Description of Leicestershire, London, 1622, p. 105 and p. 179.

6. Nathaneal Carpenter, Geography Delineated Forth in Two Bookes, Oxford, 1625, p. 273. The passage is quoted at somewhat greater length by Edward Bensly, "Some Alterations and Errors in Successive Editions of Burton's Anatomy", Oxford Bibliographical Society Proceedings and Papers I (1922-26), 198-215, p. 215.

his "Digression of the Misery of Scholars", Burton had spoken not only for himself but for his fellow scholars at Oxford. Here is one of them, disappointed like Burton in his hopes of preferment, taking a cue from the anatomist of melancholy.

More explicit but in a similar vein is a reference by Orpheus Jr. (William Vaughn) in his Golden Fleece of 1626.[7] Democritus Jr., "which published the Anatomy of Melancholy", himself once appears as an interlocutor with Vaughn and John Florio. He inveighs against the decay of learning, "the multitude of scambling Schollers and riotous writers", the "Swarmes of over-swaying lawyers", and the difficulty of promotion at court for "modest persons". These are not quotations from the Anatomy, but they are evidence that Burton's cries for social justice were heard by at least some men of public concern and literary ability in London.

The Anatomy of Melancholy was not so polemical a book, however, that it could not serve the poet Henry King in 1627 as a subject on which to address verses "to a Lady". "Upon Mr. Burton's Melancholy" expresses the hope that the

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7. William Vaughn, The Golden Fleece, London, 1626. References to Burton, his pseudonym, and the Anatomy (they are connected) are: Part I, pp. 24-26 (Democritus Jr.'s speech to Vaughn and Florio); Part II, p. 59 (where Orpheus Jr. holds up the pseudonym of Democritus Jr. as a precedent for his own); and Part II, p. 68 (where a simile is borrowed from "D. Burton in his Anatomy of Melancholy").

lady will have no need for the Anatomy's "Phantastick Lawes".[8] Richard Holdsworth, a master at Cambridge from 1617 to 1643, in his "Directions for a student in the Universitie", recommended Burton's Anatomy among books to be read especially by gentlemen at the university (as opposed to university scholars).[9] In the same list he also named works by Bacon, Browne, Overbury, Earle, Herbert, Erasmus, and More. According to Anthony à Wood, "Gentlemen who have lost their Time, and are put to a push for Invention" turned to the Anatomy to "furnish themselves with matter for common or scholastical Discourse and Writing".[10] It was doubtless in consideration of its value as a commonplace book that Thomas Fuller called the Anatomy "a book of Philology" in 1662.[11]

Others besides the idle borrowed matter from Burton's abundant stores. John Ford made almost clinical use

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8. The Poems of Henry King, ed. Margaret Crum, Oxford, 1965, p. 154. King must have known Burton personally, for he was a student at Christ Church when Burton was a tutor, in the second decade of the seventeenth century.

9. MS 48, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, quoted by Mark Curtis, Oxford and Cambridge in Transition, 1558-1642, Oxford, 1959, p. 133.

10. Anthony à Wood, Athenae Oxoniensis, ed. Philip Bliss, London 1813-20, vol. II, pp. 652-53.

11. Thomas Fuller, The History of the Worthies of England, London, 1662, II, p. 134. Fuller also speaks of Burton's having "piled up variety of much excellent learning".

of the Anatomy in several of his plays, most notably in The Lover's Melancholy (1628).[12] Anthony à Wood spotted an early plagiarism in William Greenwood's Description of the Passion of Love (1657). Richard Whitlock borrowed liberally and without acknowledgement from Burton in his Zootomia, or Observations on the Present Manners of the English (1654).[13] One whose debt to Burton did not involve pillage was the Cambridge Platonist and Anglican controversialist Henry More. His Enthusiasmus Triumphatus of 1656, an attack on religious enthusiasm, has profited from Burton's section on religious melancholy.[14] In A Tale of a Tub, where Swift censures miscellaneous writers of Burton's ilk, he makes use of a model of religious madness derived from More's book, and through it from his fellow Anglican polemicist, Burton.[15]

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12. Much of the "Masque of Melancholy", Act II, scene iii, is taken almost verbatim from the section of the Anatomy in which Burton describes lycanthropy, hydrophobia, and similar mental disorders (I, 140-43). Ford's use of Burton has been studied by S. Blaine Ewing, Burtonian Melancholy in the Plays of John Ford, Princeton, 1940.

13. Christopher Bentley, "The Anatomy of Melancholy and Richard Whitlock's Zootomia", Renaissance and Modern Studies 13 (1969), 88-105.

14. Henry More, Enthusiasmus Triumphatus, London, 1656, revised 1662. More refers twice to "Democritus Jr.", on pp. 8-9 of the edition of 1662, which has been reprinted by the Augustan Reprint Society and edited by Michael V. De Porte, Los Angeles, 1966.

15. Phillip Harth, Swift and Anglican Rationalism, Chicago, 1966, pp. 105-115, considers the inconclusive evidence that Swift made direct use of Burton's Anatomy in A Tale of a Tub. v. also Thomas L. Canavan, "Robert Burton, Jonathan Swift, and the Tradition of Anti-Puritan Invective", Journal of the History of Ideas XXIV (1973), 227-42.

The seventeenth-century reception of the Anatomy of Melancholy, then, only testifies to the variety of the book's appeal. The remainder of this introduction will examine the merits of the three principal approaches made to the Anatomy in this century and will consider it in turn as a medical book, as an encyclopedia, and as literature.

The Anatomy of Melancholy as a Medical Treatise

Burton's Anatomy has been placed with three kinds of medical expository books: with treatises dealing solely with melancholy, with English guides to general health, and with books on the passions, complexions, humours, wits, and the like.[16] Prior to Burton's work, the English reader without Latin could consult two specialized tracts on melancholy, that of Timothy Bright and that of André du Laurens. Bright's Treatise of Melancholie first appeared in 1586 and was reprinted that same year and again in 1613. Du Laurens' Discours des Maladies Mélancholiques, first published in 1594 at Tours, was translated into

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16. Burton's relation to medical and expository books has been treated by William R. Mueller, The Anatomy of Robert Burton's England, Los Angeles, 1952, chaps. 2 and 3; Bridget Lyons, op.cit., pp. 141-48; Rosalie Colie, Paradoxia Epidemica, Princeton, 1966, p.432; Lawrence Babb, Sanity in Bedlam, East Lansing, Mich., 1959, pp. 11-12, 77-78; and Naomi L. Lipman, "Robert Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy and its Relation to the Medical Book Tradition of the English Renaissance". Master's diss., Columbia University, 1952.

English in 1599.[17] The reader of Latin had at his disposal not only the writings of the ancients and the Arabs on melancholy, but a rapidly increasing number of new treatises on the disease. The fashion of melancholy took hold among English gallants in the 1580s,[18] and the same decade saw the first Renaissance monographs on melancholy, both on the continent and in England.[19] Monographs on other morbi interni, such as lycanthropy and mania, also made their appearance at this time, but not in the numbers of those on melancholy. Monographs on melancholy and its species, all but a few of them in Latin, issued from European presses at better than the rate of one per year, excluding reprints, in the forty years preceding the first edition of Burton's Anatomy. Renaissance physicians had discussed these diseases in their bulky Opera Practica and Institutiones Medicinae before the rise of monographs, but

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17. Both works are available in modern facsimiles. Bright's Treatise was reprinted by the Cambridge University Press, 1940, with an introduction by Hardin Craig; Du Laurens' A Discourse for the Preservation of the Sight; of Melancholike Diseases; of Rheumes, and of Old Age, trans. William Surflet, by the Oxford University Press, 1938, with an introduction by Sanford Larkey.

18. Lawrence Babb, The Elizabethan Malady, East Lansing, Mich., 1951, pp. 73-75.

19. v. J.B. Friedrich, Versuch einer Literärgeschicte der Pathologie und Therapie der Psychischen Krankheiten, Wurzburg, 1830, reprinted by E.J. Bosnet, Amsterdam, 1965; also Synopsis Librorum de Pathologia et Therapia Morborum Psychicorum, Leipzig, 1830, also reprinted by E.J. Bosnet, Amsterdam, 1968; Heinrich Laehr, Die Literatur der Psychiatrie, Neurologie und von 1459-1799, Berlin, 1900; Hermann Schüling, Bibliographisches Handbuch zür Geschicte der Psychologie: Das 17. Jahrhundert, Giessen, 1964. The movement to monographs and to melancholy is clear from the chronological listings in Friedrich and Laehr.

had devoted to them single chapters, not whole books. Some of the tractates de melancholia were cast as disputationes or consilia, but many approached their subject systematically along the lines followed by Bright, Du Laurens, and Burton. If not one of the first of the monographs, Burton's is by no means the last. The pace continued with only slight abatement through the seventeenth century, and new tracts on melancholy were still appearing early in the nineteenth, by which time Burton's book had almost been forgotten and was being reprinted for the first time since 1676.

In this minor but once flourishing medical genre, Burton's Anatomy, however singular in some respects, must be ranked as one among many. The formal organization of the treatise, preface excepted, is common to other medical books. The causes, symptoms, cures, and prognostics of particular disorders march through many another treatise. Categories that may seem strange to a modern reader, like the Galenic six non-natural things (diet, evacuation and retention, air, exercise, sleeping and waking, passions and perturbations of the mind) provide the framework for many Renaissance medical books, vernacular and Latin, Burton's included. Burton's physiology is derived principally from Galen, and the medical authorities he cites are the usual ones, if in uncommon numbers. He has no new theory of melancholy to offer, and what is often identified as "Burtonian melancholy" may be found in almost any Renaissance work on the disease.

That Burton's production so far exceeds in magnitude all other treatises devoted solely to melancholy may be attributed to his ambition to compass in one volume all the possible ramifications of his subject. As he says after dividing the diseases of the head:

> Not that I find fault with those which have written on this subject before, as Jason Pratensis, Laurentius, Montaltus, T. Bright, etc., they have done very well in their several kinds and methods; yet that which one omits, another may haply see; that which one contracts, another may enlarge. To conclude with Scribanius, "that which they had neglected, or perfunctorily handled, we may more thoroughly examine; that which is obscurely delivered in them, may be perspicuously dilated and amplified by us," and so made more familiar and easy for every man's capacity, and the common good, which is the chief end of my discourse. (I, 139)[20]

Burton has a point: other treatises do omit certain aspects of melancholy. Bright, for instance, is most anxious to distinguish the physical disease from the despair produced by an afflicted conscience. He therefore slights some of the more worldly causes of discontent. Few authors discuss religious melancholy or the melancholy of nuns, maids, and widows, two topics which Burton develops at some length. Du Laurens (Burton's "Laurentius") devotes two chapters of

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20. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from Burton's Anatomy are taken from the Everyman edition, 3 vols., ed. Holbrook Jackson, London, 1932, most recently reprinted in one volume, London, 1977. Quotations from the three partitions of the Anatomy (individually paginated in Jackson's edition) are identified by a Roman numeral as well as a page number. Burton's marginalia (grouped at the end of each partition by Jackson) are identified by the page number to which they refer in the text itself.

his treatise to love-melancholy, Burton a full third of his book. Where the same author, lamenting the fall of man, decides to "go not about to redresse this deformity, I leave the discourse for learned divines",[21] Burton dons his clerical robes and addresses the matter. Hercules de Saxonia declines to meddle in controversies about the power of the devil and his agents to cause melancholy; in his "Digression of the Nature of Spirits, Bad Angels, or Devils", Burton confronts the problem, even if he fails to resolve it. Burton has the instincts of a casuist; he writes for a particular person, his reader, and for every particular case of melancholy. Only a treatise as complete as his, granting full discussion to every contingency of cause and cure, can hope to isolate the nature of a particular man's complaint and recommend a suitable remedy. Whether his dilations and amplifications in fact made melancholy "more familiar and easy for every man's capacity, and the common good" may be questioned, but such apparently was Burton's design.

Burton's Anatomy is not only a thorough but a various book. Its multifariousness, however, is not necessarily incompatible with its presentation as a medical monograph. Both the nature of Renaissance medicine and the Renaissance view of man as a being whose civic, moral, spiritual, and corporal lives were interrelated obliged a medical writer to venture forth from "physic" into astrology, botany,

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21. Du Laurens, p.81.

music, magic, and many other fields. The medical treatise might turn behaviour book or digress into climatology without indecorum. Certain features of Galenic medicine contributed to a moralized medical picture. As Oswei Temkin has observed,

> the moral aspect is potentially inherent in dietetic medicine such as Galen's which considers most internal diseases to be caused by errors of regimen, and hence avoidable. Health thus becomes a responsibility and disease a matter for possible moral reflection.[22]

Sir Thomas Elyot, for example, saw fit to take his fellow citizens to task for their gluttony in the section of his Castel of Health (1541) dealing with food and drink. Burton's subsections on the rectification of Galen's six non-naturals pass freely between medical and moral discourse. Between medicine and divinity the passage was less easy, but Burton, like Bright before him, was determined to make it. His defence of himself in the preface is first sarcastic ("why may not a melancholy divine, that can get nothing but by simony, profess physic?" [36]), then serious. Melancholy, Burton says, is "a common infirmity of body and soul, and such a one that hath as much need of a spiritual as a corporal cure" (37). Its cure, therefore, requires a "whole physician". Thus the Anatomy contains homiletic writing, such as the concluding section on the cure of despair, receipts for pharmaceutical preparations, and a mass of prescription and advice designed to work on body and

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22. Oswei Temkin, Galenism, Ithaca and London, 1973, p.40.

soul together.

Even social criticism had a legitimate place in a Renaissance medical book. The vernacular medical book in particular assumed a civic interest as a matter of course, for the sound state of the body politic was understood to be interdependent with that of its members.[23] No English writer on melancholy or general health previous to Burton had extended his reach so boldly into national economic and social problems, but Burton's treatment of them, no less than his discussion of English diet, grows out of his concern for the common Stuart weal.[24] His political diagnoses are concentrated in the section of the preface dealing with the melancholy of kingdoms and provinces, but social criticism is never very far from the surface of Burton's exposition throughout the Anatomy. It breaks forth, for instance, in the middle of his discussion of poverty as a cause of melancholy, in his section on "Exercise Rectified", where the rich and idle gentry is his target, and most forcefully in his "Digression of the Miseries of Scholars". As I have already noted, Burton's complaints early struck responsive chords.

Almost all students of the Anatomy have noted its affinities with other Renaissance medical books, and most,

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23. On this and related points, v. Colie, pp. 444-47.

24. Mueller, chaps. 4-10, and Simon, chap. 5, have examined Burton's political, economic, and religious criticisms of Jacobean England.

in addition, have recognized that Burton's work is in some way or ways different from such books. No agreement exists, however, as to the nature of this difference. "Ouvrage médical certes, mais surtout somme de sagesse", says Simon.[25] "If it is classifiable at all", writes Babb, the Anatomy belongs with the moralistic psychologies: "yet it is more limited in its announced subject, much more inclusive in its actual content, and much more animated and personal in its manner than any of these psychological treatises".[26] Babb even hypothesizes that the Anatomy as it stands "was not just the book which Burton originally planned to write".[27] He supposes that a "psychiatric treatise" evolved into a "commentary on men and manners" in the making. Yet he concedes that the lines between Burton's medical and his greater human interests are difficult to draw.

Although Burton carries the licence allowed by the open-ended conventions of Renaissance medical writing to extremes, much that may at first seem extraneous to a treatise on melancholy may be justified both by precedent and by Burton's ambitious plan. The proportions of the Anatomy are not those of the typical medical monograph, but with the exception of the "Digression of Air" and the prefatory

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25. Simon, p. 103.

26. Babb, Sanity in Bedlam, p. 12.

27. ibid., p.28.

matter, including several poems as well as the "Satyricall Preface" itself, everything in the Anatomy is directly attached to the strict scheme of a treatise on melancholy. Burton took five opportunities to rewrite his book, but he never changed its basic design. So extensive is the Anatomy and so apparently inclusive is it that some scholars have sought to define it with respect to a wider expository form than that of the medical book, the encyclopedia.

The Anatomy of Melancholy as an Encyclopedia

That the parts of melancholy are to Burton's Anatomy what the six days of creation are to an encyclopedia in the hexameral tradition, as those who place the Anatomy with works like John Swan's Speculum Mundi (1635) or medieval compendia seem to suggest, is a somewhat fanciful notion.[28] If such an idea has a certain baroque, or morbid appeal, it is only because there is nothing in creation that is not or might not be incorporated into Burton's scheme. Osler called Burton "the last of the great transmitters",[29] but the transmission of knowledge in straightforward expository fashion is not Burton's primary objective. The relationship of the Anatomy to the development of Renaissance encyclopedism is nevertheless a close one.

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28. Paul Jordan-Smith, Bibliographia Burtoniana, Stanford and London, 1931, pp. 27-28, sees Burton as a latter-day Pliny or Vincent of Beauvais. He mentions Swan's book as another representative of what he mistakenly calls a "literary tradition".

29. Sir William Osler, "Extract from Creators, Transmuters, and Transmitters", Oxford Bibliographical Society Proceedings and Papers I (1922-26), 216-17, p. 216.

Burton's title promises not merely a treatise on melancholy, but an anatomy of it. Anatomy had both its English and its Latin line. The English anatomies, of which Paul Jordan-Smith lists twenty-two from 1544 to 1622,[30] among them works by John Lyly, Sir Philip Sidney, Robert Greene, Thomas Nashe, Philip Stubbes, and Sir John Harington, tended toward satire or romance, although there are one or two small-scale discursive works in Jordan-Smith's compilation. When compared to the Latin productions of the same period, however, the English examples will be seen to take anatomy in a much looser way. Burton's unfettered prose owes something to the style of these English works, but his method is that of the systematic Latin anatomies.

The Latin anatomies are the product of reforms in the teaching of logic, rhetoric, and dialectic instituted in the mid-sixteenth century by the Frenchman Peter Ramus and carried on by his followers in universities throughout Europe. The tendency among Ramist or Ramist-inspired works of the early seventeenth century is to treat knowledge as a body whose contents may be subjected to an orderly

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30. Jordan-Smith, p.23.

analysis.[31] The body of knowledge anatomized may consist of a single subject, as in Anthony Zara's Anatomia Ingeniorum (Venice, 1615), or, as in J.H. Alsted's Encyclopedia,[32] of the whole of knowledge. In the preface to his Encyclopedia, Alsted speaks of the thirty-eight synoptic tables (like Burton's) that precede his work as "adumbrantes Oeconomiam, ut velut Anatomen, huius Encyclopediae".[33] Zara's treatise lacks the Ramist tables normally associated with the Latin anatomies, but it is mentioned by Burton as providing a precedent for his own title and his divisions of members, sections, and subsections. Diagrammatic synopses are a common feature of English as well as Latin technical treatises of the time, but no previous English writer had employed them on such a scale and with such a degree of systematic passion as Burton. He found the Ramist scheme of dichotomies, generals and particulars useful for organizing his material,

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31. Walter Ong, S.J., Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue, Cambridge, Mass., 1958, provides the background of these works and in his chapter on "The Diffusion of Ramism", p. 315, notes the "fad of thinking of scientific or quasi-scientific treatises as presentations of 'bodies' of knowledge" and the related "fad of performing intellectual 'anatomies', which are analyses or 'dissections' of such 'bodies' of knowledge". He mentions Lyly's Anatomy of Wit, Nashe's Anatomy of Absurdity, and Burton's work as examples of a genre "far more developed in the Latin tradition than the scattered vernacular production would indicate". v. also David Renaker, "Robert Burton and Ramist Method", Renaissance Quarterly XXIV (1971), 210-220.

32. Alsted's Encyclopedia was first published in 1620, enlarged in 1630, and again in 1649. In the preface to his work, Alsted names fifteen other Renaissance encyclopedists among his predecessors, some Ramist, some not, several of whom furnish Burton with material (Giralmo Cardano, for example).

33. Johannes Alsted, Encyclopedia, Herborn, 1630, p.1.

and he evidently took an officious pleasure in prosecuting method for its own sake. Burton's method, and the mixed results of his application of it, will be discussed in some detail in a later portion of this dissertation.[34] At the moment it is necessary only to register that in addition to its ties to medical books on melancholy, Burton's Anatomy has cousins in a family of learning of which it is perhaps the only full-fledged vernacular, and surely the only living member.

The Anatomy may be said to be encyclopedic, but it is not a true encyclopedia, in either Renaissance or modern terms. The nature of its difference from the Ramist encyclopedia or anatomy and from the medical book is similar: it has to do with the relationship of expository to literary or fictive discourse, a relation not yet adequately explored by those who have read the Anatomy as literature.

The Anatomy of Melancholy as Literature

From the point of view of the student of literature, it is generally more rewarding to regard "as literature" anything composed of letters than it is to conceive and apply a philosophical definition of literature to the body of written works with the aim of designating certain of them as the proper objects of literary study. In practice, however, most scholars infer the existence of specifically

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34. v. infra, pp. 365-83.

literary features in the works they write about. The theoretical underpinnings of practical criticism may ordinarily go unexamined without hindering the appreciation or understanding of most literary works. From time to time, however, criticism returns to the fundamental problems of poetics in order to review its assumptions. Questions of literature's 'literariness', fruitfully reintroduced into critical debate earlier in this century by the Russian formalists, have made a pose of theoretical naiveté increasingly difficult (and undesirable) to maintain. Certain works and certain periods of literature, moreover, lend themselves to a reconsideration of literary theory. One such period is our own, in which the poetic, didactic, and scientific uses of language appear to have diverged. Another is the earlier seventeenth century, when these same uses of language are so often difficult to distinguish. Among English works of this period, perhaps none poses questions of 'literariness' so acutely as the Anatomy of Melancholy.

Failure by Burton's critics to confront these questions has, I think, limited insight into the nature and workings of his book. Some scholars have nonetheless been able to read the Anatomy, or parts of it, "as literature" with partial success. It is now generally recognized, for example, that Burton was no mere compiler of wisdom but made deliberate use of techniques and conventions usually assumed to be literary. Some of the Anatomy's perversities are now held to be the wilful strokes of an artful

if extravagant rhetorician. Rosalie Colie has proposed that Burton was working within the tradition of formal paradox that enjoyed such a vogue in the Renaissance.[35] James Tillman has noted parallels between Burton's and Horace's satiric self-depreciation.[36] Stanley Fish's reading of the preface has found cunning in Burton's deft play with his reader's expectations.[37] David Renaker thinks that Burton's anatomical method may be a travesty of that of the Ramists.[38] These scholars, incidentally, are not the first to call Burton's bluff. Those few who failed to appreciate the Anatomy in the nineteenth century sometimes saw through to a duplicitous Burton. Lowell thought the book's confusion was deliberate.[39] T.E. Brown charged that method and order were mere affectation.[40]

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35. Colie, chap. 14.

36. James S. Tillman, "The Satirist Satirized: Burton's Democritus Jr.", Studies in the Literary Imagination X (1977), 89-96.

37. Stanley Fish, Self-Consuming Artifacts, Berkeley, 1972, chap. VI. For a discussion of Fish's essay, v. supra, pp. 262-70.

38. Renaker, "Robert Burton and Ramist Method".

39. Cited by Holbrook Jackson in his introduction to the Everyman edition of the Anatomy, xii.

40. T.E. Brown, "Robert Burton, a Causerie", p.265.

The insights of Colie, Fish, and Renaker are valuable, but their critical thrust may be taken too far. The balanced ambivalence of the Anatomy's arguments may be knocked out of kelter when Burton is seen as a poseur not seriously attached to his subject. We hear from Bridget Lyons, for instance, of Burton's "scepticism and his mockery of moral and medical precepts", that Burton "exploits the uselessness of melancholy as a medical category", and that he is "preoccupied by subjects (and by methods of dealing with them) that he recognizes to have little validity".[41] If Lyons mistakes the Anatomy by conceiving of Burton as wholly detached from the matter of his book, it is doubtless naive, on the other hand, to read all the quirks and poses of Burton's style as an unmediated self-portrait of his personality. This mad but genteel Burton of the last century was a caricature of the dons that admired him, hyperbolically whimsical but incapable of dissimulation. "In some Elysian common-room do you still recreate the Antients of Christ-Church with your facete anecdotes ?" apostrophized A.H. Bullen in his introduction to the Shilleto edition of the Anatomy (1893).[42] Bullen naturally made much of Burton's "modesty" and "honesty" (reported by Anthony à Wood).

A middle but an errant course is steered by Ruth Fox in her recent book The Tangled Chain: The Structure of

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41. Lyons, Voices of Melancholy, pp. 146-47.

42. Burton, Anatomy, ed. Rev. A.R. Shilleto, London, 1893, xxviii.

Disorder in the Anatomy of Melancholy,[43] the longest published attempt to provide a comprehensive reading of the Anatomy, as opposed to a survey of its contents. In proportion to its almost three-hundred pages this book contributes little to the advancement of learning. Since, however, it has been hailed in some quarters as "almost miraculous",[44] "a revelation",[45] "a definitive study",[46] and a book "to induce scholars to stay up a few extra hours at night",[47] it requires notice here.

Fox approaches the Anatomy as "a pleasing and useful encyclopedia of human ideas" that "demands to be confronted on its own terms as a unique artistic creation".[48] She satisfies this demand by concentrating her analysis on the structure of Burton's work, for she claims that structure is "the primary means of artistic statement in the Anatomy"[49] (her approach has nothing to do with structuralist criticism, however). She explains:

> "Structure" in the Anatomy takes two coexisting forms, the scholastic one of three partitions and another of Preface, Partitions I and II, and Partition III, and the tension between these structures gives the book

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43. Ruth Fox, The Tangled Chain, Berkeley, 1976.

44. Michael McCanles, dust-jacket of Fox, The Tangled Chain.

45. ibid.

46. ibid.

47. John F. Sena, review of Fox, The Tangled Chain, in English Language Notes XV (1977), 134-36, p.134.

48. Fox, p.2.

49. ibid., p.5.

> both an artificial (or "gothic") unity and an "organic" unity inherent in the person of Democritus Jr., who as scholar-artist makes a study of disease into an artifact and gives the disorder of human life the form and order of art.[50]

Despite appearances, a thesis may be disentangled from this prose. The "structure" of which Fox speaks is the vehicle for "the reclamation of order in the midst of disorder", which she considers to be the Anatomy's leading theme. Not only does Burton's structure impose an order on the chaotic post-lapsarian world, she argues, but it represents the process of ordering the world through art. Hence the "tension" between the two forms of which, Fox says, the Anatomy consists. The first of these (the "scholastic" form of the three partitions), "is what the anatomy of man might be if in Adam's fall we had not all sinned".[51] This order, lost with the fall, can be reasserted only if it is modified to take account of the disorderliness of existence in a melancholy world. The task of modification falls to the Anatomy's preface and formal digressions. By means of "method and composition" (the words are Burton's), the "scholar-artist" may work the chaos of the world into a "structure of disorder" that imitates in tangled form the prelapsarian order.

Although Fox's perception of the tension between order and disorder in the Anatomy and its link to norms and anomalies of structure is not without promise, her demonstra-

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50. ibid., p.9.

51. ibid., p.41.

tion of how the Anatomy works as art is both unwieldy and inaccurate, when it is not simplistic. At one moment, "method and composition" are the agents of Burton's artistic ordering; at another, "method freed by art" assumes the same role. Nowhere does Fox attempt to discern what Burton's method actually consists of, but instead reposes her analysis on an analogy with the structure of the Gothic cathedral, which recurs in her pages like an idée fixe. "The art of the Anatomy of Melancholy", she says, "is that of an artist who joins in one by cutting apart".[52] Though this claim has the allure of paradox, it is unfortunately just false logic. Fox's notion of the Anatomy's organic unity of form is severely limited, if not contradicted, by her conception of Democritus Jr.'s persona as solely that of a "scholar-artist". She is able to demonstrate that the Anatomy's "formal digressions" (that is, those noted in the synopses) challenge the order of knowledge and certainty, but cannot see that Burton's style throughout the Anatomy is digressive. Occasionally she strains her strict analysis of structure to the point of absurdity:

> The title page presents a conflation of the synoptic tables and the index: ordered but not balanced, it is a manifestatio of logical order modified by the not quite logical associations of the emblems, as if one were to view the perfect logic of a High Gothic facade only to discover on closer inspection....[53]

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52. ibid., p.9.

53. ibid., p.34.

She proposes that the structure of Burton's title-page is a model of "the cutter's art" which gives the Anatomy its form and meaning. Ultimately Fox abandons such subtle analyses and is content to watch while Burton "fits a curly brace around a series of ideas and aligns them in an order".[54] "Composition and method" finally give way before "the prosody of thought".[55] By fitting man to the form of a book, the Anatomy "shows what it means by being", for, as Fox concludes, "it is art which says of life that art is life".[56]

By claiming too much for Burton, Fox trivializes the struggles and triumphs of his art. Consolation is not enough; Fox must find "progress" in Burton's Anatomy ("He is creating by the word, saying 'Let this be', and so he is proving the power of art to restate Fortune's merry-go-round as progress").[57] Indeed, she blithely asserts that "paradise can be regained", that it is "a man-made thing".[58] Such claims beckon for Burton's own satire. Fox need not fear: she mentions satire only to say that Burton cannot write it.[59] Not surprisingly, humour and irony receive scant attention in a book which speaks of art in mellow,

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54. ibid., p.38.

55. ibid., pp. 255ff.

56. ibid., p. 274.

57. ibid., p. 263.

58. ibid., p. 259.

59. ibid., p. 83.

reverential tones.

Although Fox construes a tension between the epistemological assumptions of the Anatomy's "scholastic" form and the limitations of such a form to "express mankind", she is not sure what to call the book that results from this tension. Thus she equivocates. Its author is a "poetic scholar", a "scholar-artist", a "liberal scientist"; he writes "an encyclopedia of human ideas", an "artifact". In effect, Fox does not read the Anatomy as literature at all, but as a complicated treatise with "human" overtones. When a reader opens the Anatomy, she says,

> and finds an apparatus of synoptic tables, carefully plotted title page, explanatory and exhortative poems to book and reader, and alphabetized index, when he turns the pages and discovers the author laying his matter out in sections and subsections, the reader is being shown the nature of this literary work as a consciously assembled artifact.[60]

This is clearly to beg the question of what makes the work "literary" in the first place. The only difference between "artificial" and "natural" expression that Fox can find, moreover, is that "artistic works... declare their meaning through structure which is patently artificial, self-consciously planned".[61] Such a formulation is not only tautological, but is also ineffectual in distinguishing a work like the Anatomy from, say, The Tangled Chain, with its table of contents, epigraph from Shakespeare, recherché title, and alphabetized index.

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60. ibid., p.3.

61. ibid., p.2.

Lastly among literary approaches that have been made to Burton's Anatomy is that by way of literary genre. In his discussion of Menippean satire in the Anatomy of Criticism, Northrop Frye stated that:

> the creative treatment of exhaustive erudition is the organizing principle of the greatest Menippean satire in English before Swift, Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy. Here human society is studied in terms of the intellectual pattern provided by the conception of melancholy, a symposium of books replaces dialogue, and the result is the most comprehensive survey of human life in one book that English literature had seen since Chaucer.[62]

Frye did not elaborate his observation, and with one exception, his lead has not been followed. In an article on "Genre and Satiric Strategy in Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy", Bud Korkowski endorsed Frye's classification of the Anatomy as Menippean satire, but reduced the genre's aim in the Renaissance to satire on the "theologus gloriosus".[63] He was thus able to affirm:

> If Burton is granted the objective of satirizing religious fanaticism, the structure of the Anatomy, otherwise a planless jumble to the casual inquirer, approaches near-linearity.[64]

This is sheer perversity. All scholars are humourous (as Burton says), but some are more humourous than others.

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62. Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, Princeton, 1957, p.311.

63. Bud Korkowski, "Genre and Satiric Strategy in Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy", Genre 8 (1975), pp. 74-87.

64. ibid., p.79.

Without reference to Frye, Rosalie Colie wonders in an aside to a discussion of Burton's use of Erasmus' Praise of Folly whether "one might even postulate a 'Lucianic' heritage for a tonal genre (in which belong e.g., Erasmus, More, Alberti, Rabelais, Ariosto, Cervantes, Burton, Swift, Sterne, Diderot, Voltaire, and Joyce), a deliberate and demarcated tradition of irony".[65] Although resemblances between Burton's Anatomy and various works by the authors listed by Colie have often been remarked, the Anatomy of Melancholy has never been studied (Korkowski's article aside) with reference to the features which link these works in one literary genre. The purpose of this dissertation is to make such a study.

Menippean satire, which often turns out to be the genre of works generally held, like the Anatomy, to be unclassifiable, has itself proved difficult to describe. Despite the calibre and popularity of the genre's greatest works, it has received only isolated scholarly attention. To pronounce the Anatomy a Menippean satire in the absence of a theoretical understanding of the genre, or to depend upon a theoretical foundation as slight as Frye's, is clearly unsatisfactory. Before the matter of the Anatomy's 'literariness' can be resolved, the nature of one kind of literature, Menippean satire, must be explored.

The object of chapters two and three of this study is accordingly to provide a generic background in which to

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65. Rosalie Colie, "Some notes on Burton's Erasmus", Renaissance Quarterly XX (1967), 335-41, p.335.

situate Burton's Anatomy. In the final section of chapter three I resume inductive argument about the nature of the Anatomy and in particular about its relation to medical and encyclopedic forms. In chapters four and five, respectively, I offer a reading of the Anatomy's preface and of the book as a whole. Chapter six proposes to confirm my reading by appeal to the use Sterne made of Burton in Tristram Shandy.

The aim of this study is to bring Burton's Anatomy once and for all into the forum of literature. Even in the forum, however, it will always strike an odd figure, and no pedestal alone will ever quite support it. Literary genre may provide a context in which to read the Anatomy, but Burton's book will always remain (in appearance at least) sui generis.

CHAPTER TWO

MENIPPEAN SATIRE IN ANTIQUITY

If literary genres exist at all - and if they do not, the illusion of their existence has been perpetuated through two and one half millenia of criticism and imitation - they exist as conventions. Through them, an author asks certain responses from his readers, and readers in turn form expectations and draw conclusions about an author's text.[1] Like fiction itself, genre is a contract between writer and reader.[2] An author may write the name of a genre into his contract, and a reader may be quick to classify the kind of work he has before him. Alternatively, the generic contract may go unnamed or perhaps unrecognized, even as its articles, written into form and language themselves, continue to direct a writer's expression or a reader's interpretation. Literary genres exhibit typical, not ideal features. They are not Platonic entities, but "codifications of discursive properties", in Todorov's phrase.[3] Their conventions may be modified by particular historical contexts and are subject to development.

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1. v. Tzvetan Todorov, "The Origin of Genres", New Literary History 8 (1976), 159-70.

2. Frederic Jameson discusses this idea in "Magical Narratives: Romance as Genre", New Literary History 7 (1975), 135-63.

3. Todorov, "The Origin of Genres", p. 162.

To codify works in terms of class concepts, however, no matter how empirically, is to employ a covert Platonism. Codification not only produces generalizations but proceeds from them. To isolate the essential generic quality of a group of works is no more than to describe the principle on which the works were assembled together in the first place.[4] To avoid this logical circularity, one must adopt the idealist position that there exist certain generic concepts independent of the works that may exemplify them. Yet this approach too has its shortcomings. It assumes an autonomous realm of forms and is at a loss to explain the origins and historical development of literary genres except in terms of the phenomenology of ideal essences. Perhaps every theory of genre, and every perception of genre, effects an uneasy compromise between the individual work and the various collective categories to which it may be assigned (including that of literature itself) and between inductive and deductive reasoning. The following discussion is no exception.

If Menippean satire is mentioned at all in critical discussions of satire, it is usually subordinated to formal verse satire. The distinction between the two kinds, first drawn by Quintilian,[5] is in any case subject to qualification, since Lucilius and Horace, the founders of Latin hexameter satire, both borrow liberally and openly from the Greek Menippean writers. The reasons for the neglect of Menippean satire are various. The satires of Horace, Persius, and

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4. v. Walter Benjamin, The Origin of German Tragic Drama, trans. John Osborne, London, 1977, pp. 38-39.

5. Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria X, i, 93-96.

Juvenal have been better preserved than the texts of the Greek and Roman Menippeans, Lucian and Seneca excepted. Classicists have usually preferred to confine Menippean satire to the few productions so called in antiquity.[6] Modern examples of the genre have often been seen as precursors or wayward cousins of the novel. Though Frye accorded Menippean satire a place in his scheme of modes, his theory that it "views life from a single intellectual perspective"[7] nees to be extended beyond the confines of his system. By nature hybrid and subversive of systematic thought, Menippean satire does not lend itself to the fixity of traditional critical categories. One discussion of the genre, however, is of particular value. In his Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,[8] the Russian

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6. e.g. Michael Coffey, Roman Satire, London, 1976, p. 164: "After the first century Menippean satire disappeared as a vehicle for the creative imagination".

7. Northrop Frye, The Anatomy of Criticism, p. 310.

8. First published in Russian in 1929, revised and enlarged in 1963, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics has recently been translated into French (by Guy Verret, Lausanne, 1970) and English (by R.W. Rotsel, Ann Arbor, Mich., 1973). Julia Kristeva gives a sympathetic exposition of Bakhtin's literary theories in "Le Mot, le Dialogue, et le Roman", in Σημειοτική, Paris, 1969, pp. 143-73. Ronald T. Swigger briefly discusses Bakhtin's ideas in "Fictional Encyclopediasm and the Cognitive Value of Literature", Comparative Literature Studies 12 (1975), 351-66.

formalist scholar Mikhail Bakhtin turned to the antique roots of Menippean satire in order to formulate a theory of what he called the polyphonic novel, of which he claimed Dostoyevsky was the inventor. His study is not only useful as an introduction to the Greek and Roman menippea (as he calls it) but also provides an extended treatment of a modern author in terms derived from the classical genre.

Menippean satire is, first of all, something of a misnomer. The genre was neither originated by the writer after whom it is named, the Greek Cynic Menippus of Gadara (mid-third century B.C.), nor is it exclusively satirical, as satire is commonly understood. The Roman writer Varro (first century B.C.) was the first to write Menippean satires as such. He gave the name Saturae Menippeae to a series of compositions apparently written in imitation of Menippus. Originally published in one hundred and fifty books, according to the catalogue of St. Jerome, they survive only in short fragments. Even less remains of the works of Menippus himself. It is apparent, however, that Menippus and his Greek followers had interpolated passages of poetry, mostly quotations from Homer or the tragedians, into their prose discourses, often with parodic intent. Because Varro was the first to write prosimetrum in Latin, later commentators, such as the grammarian Probus, took the mixture of prose and verse to be the Menippean aspect of Varro's satires. Many(though not all) Menippean satires do combine prose and verse, though this mixture, often taken to be the definitive characteristic of the genre, is only an incidental feature of it.

Prompted by the differences he found between the freer and more extended verse passages in Varro's satires and those reported of his supposed model Menippus, the Renaissance classical scholar Isaac Casaubon challenged the judgment of Probus. Casaubon argued that:

> Ex his sequitur, Menippeas a Varrone fuisse dictas Satiras suas, non quia prosa cum versu eodem modo miscuerint, sed propter simile quoddam jucunditatis temperamentum in materia non dissimuli: ut non abs re utrumque hunc autorem σπουδογέλοιον et scripta amborum, philosophiam ludentem sit aliquis nuncupatrurus.
>
> (Varro called his satires Menippean not because they mixed, as did Menippus', prose with verse, but because of a certain similar joking temper in subjects not unlike, so that not without reason one might call each author spoudogelois and the writings of both a playing philosophy.)[9]

It is fitting that a scholar of the Renaissance, a contemporary of Burton's in fact, should thus grasp the essential serio-comic character of Menippean satire, for the genre was revived with great energy by the champions of the new learning in the sixteenth century. It had not lain altogether dormant since antiquity, as we shall see, but the recovery of the Greek language, and particularly of the works of Lucian, by Erasmus among others, enabled it to flourish with renewed vigour in the Renaissance.

Not a mixed form, but a mixed temperament ties Varro to Menippus, according to Casaubon. The two share a similar jesting tone in treating similar subjects, i.e. the serious questions of ethics and philosophy that both writers address.

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9. Isaac Casaubon, De Satyrica Graecorum Poesi & Romanorum Satira Libri Duo, Paris, 1605, pp. 266-67.

Casaubon employs the oxymoronic term spoudogeloios, 'serious-smiling', to characterize the Menippean kernel of Varro's style. The geographer Strabo had applied it to Menippus in antiquity. To spoudogeloion is usually thought of as the distinguishing mark of the compositions of the Greek Cynics of the third century B.C., but it may be traced back as far as Aristophanes, who first used the terms spoudos and geloios in a chorus of The Frogs to describe a variable rhetorical posture.[10] Horace, a professed follower both of Old Comedy and of the Cynic moralists, writes in the first of his Satires:

> Praeterea, ne sic, ut qui jocularia, ridens
> percurram: quamquam ridentem dicere verum
> quid vetat? ut pueris olim dant crustula blandi
> doctores, elementa velunt ut discere prima:
> sed tamen amoto quaeramus seria ludo.
>
> (Furthermore, not to skip over the subject with a laugh like someone
> telling a string of jokes - and yet what harm can there be in presenting the truth with a laugh, as teachers sometimes give
> their children biscuits to coax them into learning their ABC? However, joking aside, let's take the matter seriously.)[11]

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10. Background on to spoudogeloion is provided by Donald Dudley, A History of Cynicism, London, 1937, pp. 41, 111ff; George Converse Fiske, Lucilius and Horace, Madison, Wisc., 1930, chap. 3; Niall Rudd, The Satires of Horace, Cambridge, 1966, pp. 97ff; G. Van Rooy, Studies in Classical Satire and Related Theory, Leiden, 1965, chap. 4; Ernst Robert Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages, trans. Willard Trask, New York, 1953, p. 417; Gilbert Highet , The Anatomy of Satire, Princeton, 1962, pp. 233-34; and Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, pp. 87 ff.

11. Horace, Satire I, 1, 23-27, trans. Niall Rudd, The Satires of Horace and Persius, London, 1973 (Penguin).

The familiar tag ridentem dicere verum appears to be a paraphrase of spoudogeloios. The passage as a whole is a nimble defence of the mixed tone of Horace's satires. After opening his first satire in bantering but needling fashion, he excuses his levity, then justifies it by the slightly ludicrous picture of the schoolmaster's sugared enticements to learning, in which both Horace and his readers are comically trivialized. He then announces the beginning of a serious consideration of the subject of men's wishes, but continues in the same seriocomic vein in which he had begun.

In antiquity the seriocomic embraced a wide variety of sub-genres, or "specific forms", in Frye's taxonomy. It included the symposium, the Socratic dialogue, the cynic diatribe, the memoir, the mime, and parodic genres such as the silloi, the burlesque descent to Hades, and the comic council of the gods, all travestied from epic. Even if these types are distinguishable in theory, however, they are often mingled in practice. As Bakhtin points out, the seriocomic genres are united not only from within but from without, through their common opposition to the serious genres (tragedy, epic, dialogue, history, rhetoric, and the epistle).[12] The serious genres, in Bakhtin's terms, are monological, i.e. they presuppose (or impose) an integrated and stable universe of discourse. The seriocomic genres, by contrast, are dialogical; they deny the possibility, or more precisely, the experience of such integration. As tragedy and epic enclose, Menippean forms open up, anatomize. The serious forms comprehend man; the Menippean forms are based on man's inability to know and contain his fate. To any vision of a completed system of truth, the menippea suggests some element

12. Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, pp. 87-88.

outside the system. Seriocomic forms present a challenge, open or covert, to literary and intellectual orthodoxy, a challenge that is reflected not only in their philosophic content but also in their structure and language. If 'the seriocomic' is perhaps too wide a designation for a literary genre, the sub-types into which it may be divided are both too narrow and too interrelated to serve as individual generic labels. Varro included elements from many seriocomic forms in his Saturae Menippeae, and I too will refer to the whole complex of related seriocomic genres as Menippean.

Plato and Socrates

If the origin of Menippean satire cannot be fixed with historical certainty, its first fictional avatar is Socrates, as represented in Plato's dialogues. While undoubtedly based on conversations held by an historical Socrates with fellow Athenians, the Socratic dialogue is not confined to mere reportage,[13] as comparison of Plato's dialogues with those of Xenophon shows. Many authors in fact wrote dialogues in which Socrates was the principal speaker, though only those of Plato and Xenophon, and a fragment of Antisthenes, have survived. Particularly in Plato's dialogues, the form of Socratic fiction is closely tied to Socrates' own method of philosophical inquiry (at least as Plato presents it).

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13. ibid., p. 90.

The foundation of Socrates' philosophy lies in his acknowledgment of his own ignorance. As Socrates relates in Plato's Apology, when Chaerephon asked the Delphic oracle who was wiser than Socrates, the god replied that no man was wiser. Since Socrates knew himself the possessor of no wisdom and indeed freely admitted that he knew nothing, he walked about Athens in search of one wiser than himself in the expectation of disproving the oracle. He questioned statesmen, poets, artisans, citizens, and travellers, but finding no one who was truly wise (except in his own conceit or by reputation), he was forced to admit the truth of the divine pronouncement.

Coupled to Socrates' profession of ignorance is his irony, which results from his depreciation of his own wisdom. Although technically irony is a rhetorical figure akin to dissimulation, Socratic irony has long been understood in terms beyond the merely rhetorical. In discussing irony in his Institutes, Quintilian speaks of Socrates' whole life as having irony.[14] Hegel calls Socratic irony "infinite absolute negativity", since Socrates' knowledge consists in his recognition that he does not know.[15] Kierkegaard has outlined the application of such absolute irony this way:

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14. Institutio Oratoria IX, ii, 46.

15. Or rather, Kierkegaard applies this Hegelian definition of irony to Socrates in his study The Concept of Irony, with Constant Reference to Socrates, trans. Lee M. Capel, Bloomington, 1965, pp. 63, 279.

> One may ask a question for the purpose of obtaining an answer containing the desired content, so that the more one questions, the deeper and more meaningful becomes the answer; or one may ask a question, not in the interest of obtaining an answer but to suck out the apparent content with a question and leave only an emptiness remaining. The first method naturally presupposes a content, the second an emptiness; the first is the speculative, the second the ironic.[16]

Kierkegaard proposes that the reason that Aristophanes places Socrates in a basket suspended above the stage in The Clouds is not because Socrates' philosophy is impractical, but because it refuses all foothold in actuality. Socrates hovers ironically above the world:

> Thus he elevates himself higher and higher, becoming ever lighter as he rises, seeing all things disappear beneath him from his ironical bird's eye perspective, while he himself hovers above them in ironic satisfaction borne by the absolute self-consistency of the infinite negativity within him. Thus he becomes estranged from the whole world to which he belongs (however much he may still belong to it in another sense), the contemporary consciousness affords him no predicates, ineffable and indeterminate he belongs to a different formation.[17]

Socratic ignorance is not a fixed philosophic position like the later scepticism of the Academics, nor a denial of transcendent or divine knowledge, but a provisional stance maintained for lack of any surer one. Socrates tells the jury in Plato's Apology that he possesses not superhuman wisdom, such as the Sophists may lay claim to, but "wisdom such as may perhaps be attained by man".[18] Through this

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16. ibid., p. 73.

17. ibid., p. 221.

18. Plato, Apology, trans. Benjamin Jowett, Oxford, 1964, I, 344 (20d).

qualification, "attained by man", all of the content of the category of wisdom trickles out, so that all that remains is knowledge of the limits of human knowledge. The gods, says Socrates in Xenophon's Memorabilia, have reserved to themselves the deepest secrets, and men cannot know what they are.[19] The gods may have resolved the fate of man, but meanwhile Socrates hovers ironically in suspended judgment above the possibilities. He is like the gods, in that he looks down upon the affairs of men, but unlike them, in that he does not know what they know about what man finally is.

Far from withdrawing from the world or floating away from it, Socrates engages it at every turn. He enters into dialogue with men not in order to fix ideas in their heads, but to test the ideas they harbour within themselves. He compares himself to a gadfly and a midwife: he provokes his interlocutors into a defence of themselves and their positions, and he assists them in bringing into the world of discourse their unrealized conceptions. It is here that the ironic devices characteristic of Socrates' conversational style come into play. He does not attack others' notions directly, but brings them by questions to the point where they must collapse of their own weight. Socrates' irony insinuates itself into the minds of his fellow talkers until they themselves see the limitations of their knowledge.

Just as Socrates cross-examines the citizens of Athens, the form of Plato's Socratic writings contests certain other organizations of the word, namely rhetoric and tragedy. The

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19. Xenophon, Memorabilia, I, i, 8, quoted by Kierkegaard, The Concept of Irony, p. 57n and p. 201.

Sophists teach wisdom through rhetoric; Socrates teaches ignorance through dialogue with rhetoric itself. So too the Socratic dialogue makes an implicit criticism of tragedy (the form Plato abandoned for dialogue). For the tragic hero, death marks the point from which life can be measured, when knowledge is complete. For the Socrates of Plato's Apology, however, death cannot be tragic because it has no finality.[20] Not annihilation or immortality, but further uncertainty awaits mankind. Socrates' descent to Hades may perhaps introduce him into the company of the ancient poets and heroes.

> I shall then be able to continue my search into true and false knowledge; as in this world, so also in the next; and I shall find out who is wise, and who pretends to be wise, and is not. What would not a man give, O judges, to be able to examine the leader of the great Trojan expedition; or Odysseus or Sisyphus, or numberless others, men and women too! What infinite delight would there be in conversing with them and asking them questions.[21]

As Bakhtin observes, Socrates seems to foretell the popular Menippean genre of dialogues of the dead, in which shades from different historical periods meet and enter into conversation with each other.[22] The Symposium too ends with an anti-tragic speculation. Socrates convinces Aristophanes and Aristodemus that the same man may excel in writing both tragedy and comedy. Socrates' argument is that the writing

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20. v. Benjamin, The Origin of German Tragic Drama, p. 113.

21. Plato, Apology, trans. Jowett, I, 366 (41c).

22. Bakhtin, p. 92.

of dramas is a craft, but the implication is that no certain determination of the nature of life can be made: it is both tragic and comic, a drama without a form. When Burton calls his Anatomy a tragicomedy, he is not quoting Socrates; one might say, however, that the language of genre quotes Socrates for him.

The picture of Socrates drawn by Alcibiades in his eulogy in Plato's Symposium signifies the nature of the literary form in which Plato set the adventures of his philosophic antihero. Alcibiades compares Socrates to a satyr, a flute player, and a figure of Silenus, the pot-bellied god of wine and feasting. Busts of Silenus, he says, are set up in statuaries' shops. On the outside they are grotesque and ridiculous, but they are made to open in the middle and show within the images of gods.

> Is he not like a Silenus in this? To be sure he is: his outer mask is the carved head of the Silenus; but, O my companions in drink, when he is opened, what temperance there is residing within. Know you that beauty and wealth and honour, at which the many wonder, are of no account with him, and are utterly despised by him: he regards not at all the persons who are gifted with them; mankind are nothing to him; all his life is spent in mocking and flouting at them. But when I opened him, and looked within at his serious purpose, I saw in him divine and golden images of such fascinating beauty that I was ready to do in a moment whatever Socrates commanded.[23]

Later Alcibiades compares Socrates' words themselves to the Silenus figures:

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23. Plato, Symposium, trans. Jowett revised by Moses Hadas, Chicago, 1953, p. 133 (216e).

> They are ridiculous when you first hear them; he clothes himself in language that is like the skin of the wanton satyr - for his talk is of pack-asses and smiths and cobblers and curriers, and he is always repeating the same things in the same words, so that any ignorant or inexperienced person might feel disposed to laugh at him; but he who opens the bust and sees what is within will find that they are the only words which have a meaning in them, and also the most divine, abounding in fair images of virtue, and of the widest comprehension, or rather extending to the whole duty of a good and honourable man.[24]

Alcibiades' words must be taken in a similar way. On the face of it, his praise of Socrates is a comical fiction no less than Aristophanes' fable of the androgynes. Socrates' probing irony becomes flouting and mockery; dialogue with Socrates is reduced to unsuccessful flirtation; as Socrates mocks mankind, so ignorant men laugh back at him. This is clearly not the 'historical' Socrates,but a concentrated image of the Socratic idea and an emblem of the seriocomic word. The intoxicated Alcibiades, like an inspired rhapsode, presents his fellow drinkers with an image of Socrates that is at once comically distorted and philosophically penetrating.

Plato's dialogues retain their seriocomic character only as they remain truly dialogical.[25] To the degree that in his later years they become a means of expounding a philosophical system, they sacrifice their irony and the element of geloios. Dialogue loses its Silenus-like ambivalence once it is employed in the service of known and finalized ideas.

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24. ibid., pp. 139-40 (221e).

25. v. Bakhtin, p. 90, and Rodney P. Robinson, Plato's Earlier Dialectic, Oxford, 1953, p. 19.

The dialogue form itself no more determines the generic character of what it conveys than does the prosimetrum. Though the philosophical dialogue declines after Plato, the seriocomic displays its independence of external form by infusing itself into other genres of Greek literature.

The Cynics; Menippus and Bion

Of all the schools that arose after the death of Socrates and claimed descent from him, Cynicism exercised the greatest influence on the development of Menippean satire.[26] The philosophical position of the Cynics is an impoverished Socratism: "from the noble quest to satisfy the curiosity of the intellect, it descended to become Daily Strength for Daily Needs".[27] Its principal features are an attack on all knowledge except the moral and pragmatic; a challenge, in the name of nature, to all customs and received opinion; a search for the ideal of the sage, the man free from passion and indifferent to fortune; all in a style of teaching which combines coarse jesting with ethical seriousness. Diogenes, Crates, and Antisthenes[28] are the earliest and best known of the Cynics. They taught by means of frank and incisive

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26. Donald Dudley, A History of Cynicism, chap. V.

27. ibid., ix.

28. As Dudley points out, Antisthenes was a follower of Socrates, not Diogenes. He was conscripted into Cynic ranks by later Stoic and Cynic writers who fabricated successions of the philosophers to serve their own ends.

sentences, through the epistle and the dialogue, and by means of their own eccentric and independent lives. Lucian later portrayed these three philosophers (together with Menippus) ridiculing new arrivals to the underworld in one of his Dialogues of the Dead. Despite their legendary stature, they are of lesser literary importance than their followers of the third century B.C.

With the decay of the schools and of the Olympian religion, teachers of ethics, often Cynics, wandered throughout the Greek empire preaching philosophy at public gatherings. Among these popular preachers were Menippus, from Syria, and Bion, from Borysthenes near the Black Sea. Both developed novel and striking forms of ethical instruction in the serio-comic mode.

Menippus, in Dudley's phrase, "like the Cheshire cat, has faded away to a grin".[29] Diogenes Laertius records the titles of thirteen of Menippus' compositions, but beyond these names and a few short fragments of prose and verse, nothing remains of his works.[30] Among the works attributed to him are The Sale of Diogenes, a symposium, a descent to Hades, several satires on the philosophers and grammarians, and on

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29. ibid., p. 69.

30. Brief accounts of Menippus may be found in Dudley, pp. 69-74; Michael Coffey, Roman Satire, pp. 162-63; Gilbert Highet, The Anatomy of Satire, pp. 36-37; and the article by Rudolf Helm in Pauly-Wissowa, Real-Encyclopädie 15, 1, 1931, pp.888-93.

superstition (The Epicureans and their Reverence for the Twentieth Day), letters from the gods, and a series of last wills. Varro and Lucian both wrote pieces that appear to derive from these, and they may have imitated others of Menippus' works. It is evident merely from their titles that Menippus' writings displayed considerable dramatic invention. Parody of epic (of Odysseus' journey to the underworld, for example), scenes set in heaven and hell, plots exposing men's superstitions and their last words: the fantastic settings and plot devices that are characteristic of the Menippean genre may have made their first appearance (outside the drama) in Menippus himself. He seems to have employed both narrative and dialogue and to have mixed with his prose verses in various meters, probably parodies of epic or tragedy. He also turned the philosophical epistle to comic purposes.

Varro speaks of Menippus as "that noble dog" (i.e. as a Cynic), and Lucian says that it was his manner to "bite and grin" at the same time. Menippus appears as a character in several of Lucian's dialogues, though with what accuracy of delineation it is impossible to tell. Menippean satirists often pay tribute to their ancestors, but frequently stylize them as they do so. Lucian's portrait is probably a caricature. In Plato, dialogue is philosophical even as it admits lighter elements; in Menippus, the satirical element may have preponderated. The seriocomic genres do not always mix spoudos and geloios in equal parts.

Of no less importance than Menippus for the development of Menippean satire is Bion, born of the union of a fishmonger

and a prostitute. If his parents did not actually give him his particular style of speech, at least they epitomize it.[31] Bion's works, preserved in part and at second hand through Teles, present unsavory ethical advice in a variety of seductive rhetorical postures. A contemporary compared Bion's garment of style to the particoloured robes of a hetera. The form he perfected, apparently with popular success, was the diatribe, which in Greek simply means a conversation. Like the philosophical dialogue, the Bionic diatribe contains at least two voices, typically those of Bion (or the sage) and an imaginary interlocutor, a fictus adversarius. A setting is rarely specified, and the so-called adversary is usually nameless. He is the quisquis es, 'whoever you are', of Persius's first satire and becomes the ubiquitous 'thou' of Burton's Anatomy. He is invoked with his vices to be cajoled or bullied into moral reform.

Oltramare has vividly characterized the style of the diatribe as practiced by Bion:

> The repeated use of rhetorical tropes often gives the style of the diatribe a hopping gait, a wearying and excessive medley of colours; one feels that the only unity is a constant and forced variety; each idea is expressed in a manner at once animated and pointed; the force of the frequently gross or obscene vocabulary and the striking character of the images immediately distinguish these writings from those of other moralists.[32]

Bion's epitomizer Teles (or his transmitter Stobaeus) may be

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31. On Bion, v. Dudley, pp. 62-69; Coffey, p. 92; Highet, pp. 31-35; and Fiske, pp. 178ff.

32. André Oltramare, Les Origines de la Diatribe Romaine, Geneva, 1926, p. 13.

partly responsible for the taxing compression of style in his versions of Bion's discourses, for it is clear that Bion's variety was intended to captivate and provoke his listeners, not to weary them.

> The reader is ceaselessly accosted by a teacher who seems to have undertaken to persuade him immediately in language aimed directly at winning him over. Whenever possible, the style is adapted to the dispositions of the audience at hand... the diatribist presses a throng of heterogeneous attributes upon his adversary.[33]

The language of the diatribe is packed with proverbs, anecdotes, fables, metaphor, hyperbole, parallels and oppositions, puns, and all manner of verbal invention. As in Menippus' narratives, quotations or parodies of Homer and the tragedians are interpolated incongruously for comic effect. Despite its elaborate language and borrowings from rhetoric, the diatribe is not a rhetorical showpiece. On the contrary, the witty and humorous display often works to conceal a serious ethical thrust.

In the development of the diatribe, both Cynics and Stoics had a share. The philosophical eclecticism of the form is further evidenced by its receptiveness to the Epicurean and Cyreniac ideal of pleasure (reportedly introduced by Bion). Such an ideal might seem inconsistent with Cynic and Stoic austerity, but the overriding concern of the diatribe is to procure well-being for its listeners, not to convert them to

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33. ibid.

any particular school of philosophy. To this end, certain propositions recur regularly but unsystematically in the Greek and Roman diatribe.[34] For example, all knowledge not immediately directed to moral ends is to be rejected. Values dependent on convention or opinion are to be overturned. The customs of barbarians and foreign nations are held up as a criticism of the artificial standards of Greek civilization. Self-possession, content with one's lot, tranquillitas animi, are necessary for happiness; good or ill fortune is to be received indifferently. Exile, poverty, servitude, and death are not evil in themselves; riches, noble birth, political power, and beauty are not in themselves good. Simple satisfaction of natural desires is recommended. The ideal of unadorned nature, as seen in beasts and primitive societies, is to be followed. The passions, greed, anger, love, and fear, are forms of madness and are likened to bodily ills; thus Bion compares covetousness to the thirst of a man with dropsy. Virtue is the only good, and only reason can secure virtue. Self-knowledge, particularly knowledge of the limits of human capacity, is the first step toward wisdom.

All these prescriptions are given concrete form in the figure of the sage, whose virtue and freedom are perfect.[35] Truly wise men, however, are very rare, or, as Crates says (perhaps hyperbolically), impossible to find. It is evident

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34. Oltramare, pp. 44-65, provides a copious if perhaps oversystematic compilation of the themes of the Greek and Roman diatribe, from which my list is drawn.

35. ibid., p. 57-60.

that such an ideal of wisdom, though perhaps attainable by a Diogenes or a Socrates, was unsuitable for close imitation by the popular audiences before whom the itinerant Cynics and Stoics preached. What practical purpose then does it serve? For the satirist, the figure of the sage acts as a measure of human folly. The wisdom of the sage works to discover to the preacher's audience their illusions, their lack of moral freedom, their madness. Self-knowledge must precede self-improvement; moral instruction will have no effect unless the need for it can be felt. The adversarius must see his disease before he can undertake its cure. The diatribe thus enters into a polemic relation with its fictional strawman and the flesh and blood listeners he represents. Hence the common meaning of diatribe as a speech of blame. Beside the perfect virtue of the sage, human vices are monstrous. Bion had been a pupil of Theophrastus, creator of the genre of the character, and seems to have introduced into Cynic preaching the exaggerated depiction of foolish habits. Grotesque personifications of human vices are a principal feature of his diatribes. The sage may be free from moral criticism, but the diatribist himself is not. When Diogenes Laertius accuses Bion of having an enjoyment of personal vanity and absurdity, it is probable that he is mistaking Bion's amused self-mockery for shameless pride in his faults.[36] In several of the Satires of Horace, for which Bion's diatribes served as a model, Horace himself is the adversarius. The poet is arraigned by followers of certain self-styled Cynic wise-men who are also made to look

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36. v. Fiske, Lucilius and Horace, p. 183.

ridiculous.

The form that Bion introduced in the third century B.C. flourished, with modifications, for a full five centuries thereafter. Seneca's Epistles, Epictetus' Discourses, and Plutarch's Moralia, among other pagan writings in the early Christian era, are the formal and thematic descendants of the Bionic diatribe.[37] Christian writers themselves employ stylistic and plot devices developed in the Greek and Roman menippea. As Bakhtin remarks, the Christian sermon derived its techniques not from classical rhetoric but from more popular forms of persuasion.[38] The Epistles of St. Paul, himself an itinerant preacher, contain numerous correspondences with the Greek diatribe.[39] It is difficult to say at what point the diatribe is no longer seriocomic. The letters and discourses of Seneca and Plutarch, for example, are moral essays, not Menippean satires. They lack the linguistic and dramatic inventiveness of their Hellenistic progenitors as well as the comic element.

Varro

It is now necessary to examine briefly the satirical works of two Roman imitators of Menippus and Bion, Varro

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37. v. Coffey, p. 92; for a discussion of elements of the diatribe in Plutarch's Moralia, v. D.A. Russell, "On Reading Plutarch's Moralia", Greece and Rome 15 (1968), 130-46.

38. Bakhtin, p. 98, and on Menippean elements in the Gospels and in early and medieval Christian literature, p.111.

39. v. the listing by Marrou under "Diatribe" in Reallexicon für Antike und Christentum, pp. 999-1000.

and Horace, respectively. Varro's Saturae Menippeae have been less influential than Menippus' or Bion's writings, but for that very reason afford a picture of the classical Menippean satire undistorted by later imitation. Menippus and Bion were slaves who had acquired an education and a distaste for speculative philosophy at the same time. Varro came from an old provincial family and was, according to Quintilian, the most learned of the Romans. His learning, however, did not prevent his satirizing encyclopedic knowledge in Agatho.

> neque auro aut genere aut multiplici scientia
> sufflatus quaerit Socratis vestigia. (6)
>
> (and, neither puffed up by his riches, his birth, nor his wide-ranging knowledge, he traces the footsteps of Socrates.)[40]

Though it is unlikely that Varro is speaking of himself in these lines, he shares with this nameless, probably fictional contemporary a Cynic, and Socratic disregard for scientia, for knowledge unrelated to the immediate concerns of the soul.

Although Varro's Saturae were later sometimes called "cynicae", their philosophical orientation is not purely that of the Cynics. Where the Cynics preach living in accord with Nature, Varro urges a return to the mos maiorum, to the customs of the Roman forefathers. Instead of engaging in radical criticism of all restrictive social convention, Varro champions the settled order of ancient Rome. Whatever the differences between his ideals and those of the Cynics,

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40. Marcus Terentius Varro, Saturae Menippeae, ed. Jean-Pierre Cèbe, Paris, 1972-75. Cèbe's edition, in progress, ends with fragment 108; citations of other fragments are taken from the edition of F. Buecheler, Petronii Satirae, Berlin, 1895.

however, Varro was one with them in his criticism of his contemporaries and his celebration of an austere and lofty morality.

It is difficult to judge in what ways and to what degree the satires of Varro imitate those of Menippus. Varro probably borrows the mixture of prose and verse, the serio-comic style, and the dramatic license of his Greek model, but the Saturae Menippeae are manifestly original and Roman works. In his Academica, Cicero represents Varro as saying:

> et tamen in illis veteribus nostris, quae Menippum imitati non interpretati quadam hilaritate conspersimus, multa admixta ex intima philosophia, multa dicta dialectice.
>
> (Yet in those works I wrote years ago as adaptations, not translations, of Menippus, which I diversified with merriment of a sort, many items of technical philosophy were included and many were expressed in the manner of a logician.)[41]

The dialectical construction is not always easy to retrieve from the six hundred fragments that survive, but the hilaritas is apparent everywhere. The serious and the comic aspects of Varro's Menippeans are in any case not easily separated. Varro's wit is learned, and his intellectually pointed style is playful.

Menippus and the Greek diatribists designed their works for oral presentation. Varro probably published his satires individually as pamphlets. Despite his desire to reach and move a general audience, Varro does not engage the reader as relentlessly or unpredictably as do the diatribes of Bion.

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41. Cicero, Academica, II, i, cited and translated by Coffey, Roman Satire, pp. 151-52.

Only now and then does he address the reader directly. Taken as a whole, however, the Menippeans display an astonishing variety of subject and treatment. Each one has its own particular setting and theme, which are developed with great freedom of invention. Although first-person narrative is occasionally employed, most of the Menippeans are cast as dramatic dialogues with narrative framing. Varro speaks of his method of presentation as "hic modus scaenatilis", 'this scenical manner'.

Like the Greek spoudogeloion, and to a somewhat lesser extent like the Roman satura of Ennius and Lucilius, Varro's Menippeans are a verbal and stylistic medley. Colloquialisms are inserted into epic diction. Technical and recherché vocabulary is mixed into familiar conversation. Catachrestic metaphors, neologisms, oxymorons, nonsense words, and puns abound. Characters are vividly delineated by the language they use. Greek words, particularly in the fanciful titles, are introduced for their exoticism as well as for philosophical accuracy. The verses, not always parodic, are composed in a wide assortment of meters, not all yet naturalized from the Greek forms. For all their variety, Varro's colours are not laid on at random. Where their condition permits a closer examination, his satires disclose a careful and orderly treatment of particular themes.[42]

According to the Cynics, the sage must be an observer of

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42. v. Ulrich Knoche, Roman Satire, trans. E.S. Ramage, Bloomington, 1975, p. 66.

men. If we may judge from the imitations of Varro and Lucian, Menippus had beheld the earth from the moon or from some region of the upper air. In The Tomb of Menippus Varro eulogizes:

> hic liquit homines omnes in terra(e) pila (517)
>
> (He left all men behind upon this ball of earth.)

Varro employs the view from above in several of his satires. In Endymiones, for example, Varro (or a Cynic) sends his soul out at night to oversee the city:

> animum mitto speculatum tota urbe, ut quid facerent homines cum experrecti sint, me faceret certiorem. (105)
>
> (I send my spirit out to spy through all the city, that it may tell me what men do when they awaken.)

The object of this reconaissance is to find out if anyone manages himself better than his fellows and may serve as an example to Varro. The satire is thus an example of the Menippean search for the wise man. A catalogue of wakers (perhaps insomniacs) follows.

> quid vidit? alium curantem extremo noctis tempori. (108)
>
> (What did my spirit see? One occupying himself in the last hour of the night -)

Here the fragment ends, but the soul's search undoubtedly continues as the ways of men are passed in review.

A fragment from Know Thyself (the Greek title is borrowed from the inscription at Delphi) asks:

> non animadvertis cetarios, cum videre volunt in mari thunnos, escendere in malum alte, ut penitus per aquam perspiciant pisces? (209)
>
> (Haven't you seen fishermen who, when they want to catch sight of tunnies in the sea, climb high up on the mast of the ship in order to view the fish through the water?)

It is probable that Varro (or his spokesman) is urging the

reader (or another character) to study himself by looking upon himself from outside the limits of his self-possession, by conducting his own Socratic examination of himself. The simile by which Varro suggests this highest of philosophical goals is typically ludicrous, but the idea itself is not. Bakhtin points out that Antisthenes "considered the greatest achievement of his philosophy the 'ability to relate dialogically to himself'".[43] Bakhtin stresses the importance of dialogical introspection for the soliloquy as practiced by Augustine, a genre he says "developed within the orbit of the menippea".[44]

Self-scrutiny is given comic dramatization in Varro's Bimarcus, which plays on Varro's own first name. One half of the divided Marcus has promised to write a grammatical treatise on figures (peri tropon), but his other half, recalling the epithet (polytropon) given to Odysseus in the first line of the Odyssey, has begun to recite Homer's epic. "You're drunk, Marcus", says the conscientious Marcus to his wilfull double as he reminds him of his promise. But the other Marcus dreams, digresses, scribbles some verses of his own, and perhaps ends up by writing Bimarcus.[45] The psychological realism of this piece, with its representation of the wanderings of thought, of chance word associations, and of the reproach of the conscience, is

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43. Bakhtin, p. 98. The phrase from Diogenes Laertius' life of Antisthenes to which Bakhtin refers is translated by R.D. Hicks in the Loeb edition as "the ability to hold converse with himself".

44. ibid., p. 99.

45. Bimarcus may dramatize Varro's decision to write Menippean satires instead of philological works; v. Coffey, p. 158.

characteristic of Varro's and later menippea. There is no genre of literature so fascinated by "what passes in a man's mind" (to quote Sterne on Locke). Digression, a favourite plot device of Menippean satire, is at least given the appearance of psychological motivation. Menippean plots (however artfully contrived) tend to be modelled on the experience of language and thought, not on the principles of rhetoric or logic.

The political orientation of Varro's Menippeans, and of the Menippean genre as a whole, is two-sided. On one hand, as Bakhtin notes, elements of social utopia are often present.[46] Yet at the same time, Menippean satire turns a close eye to the affairs of the day. In Marcopolis, Varro describes an imaginary ideal city (though the title may suggest that however fine his ideal commonwealth, it is only Marcus Varro's pipedream). In Flaxtabula, on the other hand, Varro writes of the abuses in the Roman provincial administration. He does not pillory men by name in the manner of Lucilius and Aristophanes, but by type or under the cover of legend. Still, the satire is thoroughly topical.

The times themselves are often in the foreground of the menippea (as in all satire). In Sexagesis Varro represents himself as having just awakened after a sleep of fifty years. The Rome he finds is not the one in which he went to sleep. He describes the mores of the mid-first century in sensational detail, but we are not allowed to forget that the criticism comes from an excited old man. The final fragment neatly undercuts the self-righteous pose of the satirist:

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46. Bakhtin, p. 97.

"erras", inquit, "Marce: accusare nos ruminans
antiquitates". (505)

("You do us wrong, Marcus", he said, "to abuse us
while you mull over bygone days".)

Time-travelling provides the frame for another satire on times present in Sesculixes ("Ulysses and a Half"). Varro has been voyaging for a full thirty years. Upon his return to Rome, he tells yarns of foreign lands and of various philosophical schools that parody Ulysses' adventures in Homer and are perhaps based on his own experience in acquiring an education in Greece. The satire capitalizes on the mythic volume of the Ulysses theme (one common in the cynic diatribe) while maintaining an ironic distance from it. Varro both burlesques it and turns it seriously against the corruption that has taken place in his absence. No less than Homer's hero, the satirist is a man of many devices.

The travelogue is a favourite Menippean form, which Varro uses without mock-heroic trappings in Periplous ('Journey of Circumnavigation'). Unlike many of Varro's titles, this one is not invented, but was a common name for navigational guides (but also for tall tales). Varro begins his guide in the manner of a Baedeker, mentioning the geographical features of a region whose farmers till sandy soils, but without altering his chatty, informative tone, he shifts in the second part of the satire to a survey of the philosophical schools of Athens. Menippean satire often masquerades in the formal dress of the treatise or handbook. Although not serious in the same way as tragedy or the philosophical epistle, even these minor expository forms have a particular decorum and intellectual presumptuousness which render them suitable for comic appropriation by

the menippea. Satire may be only incidentally directed at the host form itself; just as often the menippea takes open delight in the conventions of the forms it parodies. For rhetoric, style is a garment; for the menippea, it is a mask and performs the same liberating and expressive functions as an authorial persona.

When the truth is not or cannot be known, the model for knowledge becomes contention among authorities, "logomachia" (to borrow the title of one of Varro's satires, in which an Epicurean and a Stoic do verbal battle). The strife of doctrines is one of the menippea's most colourful and durable topics; new knowledge is always being generated, but its relation to the absolute or unfinalized truth is forever the same. In Periplous, Varro lists philosophical opinions with a sightseer's detachment. In Andabatae ('The Blindfold Gladiators'), philosophers of several schools swing ideological swords wildly at one another. This sport was actually practiced (though not by philosophers) in ancient Rome. Varro's fable of philosophical and moral blindness is thus transposed from the common Roman scene. In his comments on this satire, Cèbe notes that the satirical motif on the "brawl of philosophers" may be found in Lucian's Jupiter Tragodeus and in Cicero's Academica, a series of dialogues on scepticism in which Varro is a speaker. We shall meet it again in Burton's Anatomy.

Bakhtin calls attention to Menippean satire's preoccupation with:

> the representation of man's unusual, abnormal moral and psychological states - insanity of all sorts ("maniac themes"), split personalities, unrestrained

> daydreaming, unusual dreams, passions bordering on insanity, suicide, etc.[47]

The Cynic commonplace that passions are a form of madness and the related Stoic paradox that all fools are mad underlie Varro's Eumenides, of which numerous fragments survive.[48] The setting is adapted from Aeschylus' tragedy. The satire is related in the first person, although it is not clear whether Varro is himself the speaker. In any case the narrator mounts the tower of Menippean speculation:

> sed nos simul atque in summam speculam venimus,
> videmus populum furiis instinctum tribus. (117)
>
> (But as soon as I came to the top of the watchtower,
> I saw mankind driven by three furies.)

These furies appear to be avarice, superstition, and luxury. The madness of Homer's Ajax is paralleled to the miser's mad greed for money. The wild rituals of various cults are vividly sketched. Varro confronts the reader with his own sensual excesses in the manner of the diatribe:

> tu non insanis, quom tibi vino corpus corrumpis mero? (137)
>
> (are you not mad when you pollute your body with unmixed wine?)

The narrator doubts his own sanity when he is beset by a crowd of screaming children. Like Orestes, however, Varro's observer is ultimately declared sane by a legal tribunal, probably on account of his steadfast adherence to common sense amid the general mania. The Cynic-Stoic theme of universal madness was also employed by the Roman verse

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47. ibid., p. 96.

48. v. David Sigsbee, "The Paradoxa Stoicorum in Varro's Menippeans", Classical Philology 71 (1976), 244-48.

satirists,[49] particularly by Horace, whose treatment of the Stoic paradoxes was one of the models for Burton's extensive use of them in his "satyricall preface".

Horace

Horace's Satires, or Sermones, as he titled them, written when Varro was still living, took the seriocomic style in another direction. Horace's model, or rather his predecessor, was the man considered by Horace, Persius, and Juvenal to have founded the genre of Roman satire, Lucilius (second century B.C.). It was Lucilius who established the hexameter form and the topics of social and personal criticism for the genre that Quintilian claimed was uniquely Roman. Unfortunately only fragments of his thirty books of satires survive. While it is true that the Greeks developed no fixed form of satire in the way that the Romans did, the influence of the Greek seriocomic genres is nevertheless important for the satires of Lucilius and Horace. Both writers pay tribute to the Socratici charti (i.e. the Socratic dialogue), both treat the common topics of Greek popular philosophy, and both naturalize the Greek spoudogeloion.[50] Lucilius wrote a council of the gods, Horace a dialogue set in Hades, and both wrote symposia and diatribes. Both writers adapted the open and plain

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49. ibid.

50. v. Fiske, Lucilius and Horace, passim.

speech of Old Comedy and of the seriocomic genres to the Roman social and political milieu, Lucilius freely, Horace with restraint. Restraint and refinement are particularly what distinguish the style of Horace from that of the Greek diatribe and from Lucilus himself. Horace's intimate tone, his metrical finish, his decorum and curiosa felicitas set his satires apart from those of all other writers, particularly from the freewheeling menippea of Varro and the Greeks. Some years after writing his satires Horace called them "Bioneis sermonibus et sale nigro" ('venomous discourses in the manner of Bion'), but his description must be taken with a grain of salt.[51]

I have already quoted Horace's formulation of the seriocomic mode and noted the subtlety with which he justifies it. Like the Greeks, he frames his mixed style in opposition to a uniformly serious one, namely that of the streetcorner expounders of Stoic morality common in Augustan Rome. These unwashed and unshaven philosophers were the Roman descendants of the tribe of itinerant Cynic teachers of ethics to which Bion and Menippus belonged. Their method of instruction, as Horace represents it, was not the volatile and entertaining one of their third century forerunners, but the lecture. Horace was a thoughtful moralist, but no preacher. Although he shared many ethical concerns with the Stoic declaimers, he found their morality dogmatic and their style pretentious.

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51. v. Coffey, Roman Satire, p. 92.

Horace's solution to his ambivalence is analogous to the method of Socrates.[52] He lets the preachers rail against vice and universal madness in such a way that they themselves appear foolish as they depict a race of fools. Furthermore, Horace does not mock the Stoics to their faces but introduces their teaching through the reports of over-zealous disciples. Horace is thus able to reap the satiric fertility of the Stoic paradoxes ('that all except the sage are mad' in II.3, 'that only the sage is free' in II.7) without expounding them in his own voice. In fact, as I have noted previously, these two satires are delivered against Horace himself, during the Saturnalia, when free speech is the rule and social roles are turned upsidedown. In these satires, and in I, 1 (on discontent with one's lot), Horace comes closest to Menippean themes and techniques.

Seneca

Of all Roman Menippean satires, Seneca's Divi Claudii Apocolocyntosis is the best preserved and the most important for the Renaissance revival of the genre. The title, which means literally 'the transformation of the divine Claudius into a pumpkin', like the satire as a whole, is a parody of

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52. W.S. Anderson discusses Horace as "The Roman Socrates" in Critical Essays on Roman Literature: Satire, ed. J. Sullivan, London, 1963, pp. 1-37. v. also J.-P. Cèbe, La Caricature et la Parodie dans le Monde Antique Romain des Origines à Juvenal, Paris, 1966, p. 262.

the apotheosis voted the emperor Claudius by the Roman senate after his death in 54 A.D. Seneca relates the manner of Claudius's death and his arrival at Olympus; the council of the gods and the deified Augustus and their refusal to admit Claudius into their company; his transportation to the underworld by way of Rome, where his funeral is being joyfully celebrated; his reception in Hades by those whom as emperor he had unjustly condemned to death; and finally his sale into infernal slavery. Seneca's tone, at once bantering and deadly serious, his style, a mixture of terse prose and polished, parodic verses, and the fantastic settings of his narrative place the Apocolocyntosis squarely in the Menippean tradition. The attack on a single political figure had not been a feature of Varro's satires or of the Greek menippea, but it is thoroughly compatible with the topicality of the genre.

The Apocolocyntosis opens with a parody of the proemia of historical narratives. An overinsistence on the complete veracity of the account of "what happened in the heavens on the third day before the ides of October" (the day of Claudius's death) suggests to the reader that the work to follow will be a fantasy, but also that it will tell the real truth about Claudius. Seneca continues:

> Haec ita vera si quis quaesiverit unde sciam, primum, si noluero, non respondebo. Quis coacturus est? Ego scio me liberum factum, ex quo suum diem obiit ille.
>
> (Ask if you like the source of my knowledge of these events which are so true; to begin with, I am not bound to please you with my answer. Who will compel me? I know the same day made me free which was the last day for him.)

Compare the opening of the Anatomy of Melancholy:

> Gentle reader, I presume thou wilt be very inquisitive to know what antic or personate actor this is, that so insolently intrudes upon this common theatre to the world's view, arrogating another man's name; whence he is, why he doth it, and what he hath to say. Although, as he said, Primum si noluero, non respondebo, quis coacturus est? I am a free man born, and may choose whether I will tell; who can compel me? (15)

Burton identifies his source in the margin as "Seneca in ludo in mortem Claudii Caesaris". In light of what follows in the Anatomy, one may see in this first of thousands of footnotes a nod in the direction of the Menippean genre which the initiated reader would not fail to catch.

Seneca's succession of poses is now deferential to the reader, now flippant. He interrupts his assertion of serious intent abruptly by a descent to comic diction (a proverb which Burton later quotes): "dicam quod mihi in buccam venerit" ('I'll say whatever pops into my head'). The historian's mask is dropped and, as Weinrich says, the buffoon stands before us.[53] Resumption of the technical language of history momentarily promises a return to a sober style, but a cunning quotation of Vergil once more subverts decorum. The poses are those of the mime, the play with the reader that of the diatribe. What Weinrich remarks of Seneca's satire applies equally to Burton's, or to any number of other Menippean satires.

> As one reads the Apocolocyntosis, one must free oneself from the printed page, one must above all get a feeling for the underlying mime, in order that the liveliness of this delightful foreword, especially its satire, may come through.[54]

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53. Otto Weinrich, Senecas Apocolocyntosis, Berlin, 1923, p.17.

54. ibid., p. 19.

Weinrich's comments on the shifting style of the Apocolocyntosis are also valid for the Menippean genre as a whole.

> Despite its conciseness, it is an extremely varied piece. Its diversity of colours and sonorities could not be better suited to presenting the changes of tone in its content, which play back and forth between jest and earnest, satire, irony, and deeper meanings.[55]

Menippean satire is sometimes charged with uneveness and with a failure to maintain a uniform satirical stance. On the contrary, inflections of tone, now frivolous, as in Seneca's anapestic dirge for the dead Claudius, now solemn, as in the speech of Augustus against Claudius's deification, are the norm in seriocomic writing. As Horace explains:

> Et sermone opus est modo tristi, saepe jocoso (I, X, 11)
>
> (You need a style which is sometimes severe and often gay.).

Though rarely mentioned in antiquity, Seneca's Apocolocyntosis is the forerunner of numerous later visions of judgment, including Byron's on Southey and Erasmus' on Pope Julius II. Renaissance imitations of the Apocolocyntosis will be discussed in the following chapter.

Petronius and Apuleius

Before passing to the pseudo-Hippocratic epistles and the works of Lucian, both of prime importance for the Renaissance menippea and Burton's Anatomy, we must consider in cursory fashion the Satyricon of Petronius and the Golden Ass (or Metamorphoses) of Apuleius. Of all the classical genres,

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55. ibid., p. 10.

Menippean satire is especially well suited to combining with or assimilating other fixed forms and to evolving new ones out of its own varied formal repertoire. To fit the Satyrican and Apuleius' Metamorphoses to a single satire formula would belie both the complexity of these works and the heterogeneity of the Menippean genre; but they may both be illuminated by considering the properties they share with other examples of the antique menippea.

Modern scholars sometimes question or qualify the Satyricon's connection to Menippean satire, on the grounds that it presents no definite satirical attitude and that certain of its Menippean stylistic traits, the prosimetrum and the gallimaufry of plot and language, may also belong to a poorly preserved tradition of the Greek comic novel.[56] Renaissance critics, and most moderns, have not been so subtle. One thesis, that the Satyricon is organized as a parody of the Greek romance, appears to fit the extended fragments of Petronius' work that we possess.[57] Thus, instead of two idealized lovers, the lowborn homosexual pair of Eumolpus and Giton are the principal actors in a series of complicated and tawdry love intrigues. Epic is also parodied in the

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56. Raymond Astbury, "Petronius, P. Oxy. 3010, and Menippean Satire", Classical Philology 72 (1977), 23-31, holds that beyond the prosimetrum, the Satyricon has nothing in common with Menippean satire. Coffey, pp. 183-94, provides a more balanced view.

57. v. E. Courtney, "Parody and Literary Allusion in Menippean Satire", Philologus 106 (1962), 86-100.

Menippean manner in the theme of the divine wrath of Priapus. Many of Petronius' parodies of prosodic and epideictic conventions are given added piquancy because they are spoken not by Nero's arbiter elegantiae, but by Encolpius, the disreputable narrator of the Satyricon, or by its host of social and literary parvenus. The device of rendering an entire narrative ironic by presenting it through a voice that unwittingly disqualifies the judgments that it offers, anticipated in the techniques of the diatribe, is so adroitly managed by Petronius that it will forever baffle readers who try to disengage a single point of view from the story.[58]

Scandalous scenes set among the lower strata of society are prominent in both the Satyricon and the Metamorphoses. As Bakhtin suggests, the naturalism of these works represents a transference to the sphere of social realism of the descent to the mythic underworld common in earlier menippea.[59] Let us recall the plot of Apuleius' romance with this in mind. Lucius is transformed into an ass because of his curiositas in seeking to know the secrets of magic. That his subsequent misfortunes constitute an elaborate punishment for his fault of overinquisitiveness, as some have argued, fails to take into account the theme of spiritual quest that predominates in the work as a whole. Lucius loses his human shape, but

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58. v. Coffey, 186-87; and Erich Auerbach, Mimesis, trans. W.R. Trask, Princeton, 1953, p. 27.

59. Bakhtin, p. 94.

through his adventures as an ass he will be transformed into a new and spiritually enlightened man. Bakhtin observes that "the content of the menippea consists of the adventures of an idea or the truth in the world".[60] He remarks that the earthly adventures of truth take place where the truth may be most acutely tested, in brothels, thieves' dens, the market place, the criminal courts. Such are the places into which Lucius is led by different masters in the course of his enforced spiritual journey. Socrates' claim that he brought philosophy down from the heavens and into the affairs of men traces a similar descent of the Idea from abstraction into experience. Note the Menippean lowlife turn Alcibiades gives to Socrates' philosophic conversation in the Symposium: "his talk is of pack-asses and smiths and cobblers and curriers".

The theme of life as a journey, first developed in the diatribe, has a wide currency in later European literature. Typically it moves between the two poles of satirical and religious revelation. Both elements are present in the Metamorphoses. Apuleius adopted the form of his book from the light, erotic romances known as Milesian tales. Into this form, whose sole purpose was to entertain, Apuleius has injected a subliminal seriousness that breaks forth in some of the sharper satirical episodes and in Lucius's final conversion to the religion of Isis. Apuleius made a comic form seriocomic, just as Rabelais appropriated the French popular chapbooks and almanacs to his own philosophic and

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60. ibid.

religious purposes.

The Pseudo-Hippocratic Letters

In the first and second centuries of the Christian era, the Greek menippea, like the Roman, elaborated its traditional forms. We know that Menippus had composed letters written as if from the gods. Later cynics developed the genre of the fictive or pseudonymous letter, writing under the names of Crates, Diogenes, and the other philosophic heroes. The so-called Hippocratic novel, which dates from the first century cynic revival, was the first extended fiction in Western literature to use the epistolary form. The pseudo-Hippocratic letters were recognized as spurious in antiquity but were nevertheless widely circulated.[61]

Any reader of the Anatomy of Melancholy knows the tale of Hippocrates' visit to Democritus, for in his preface Burton quotes at length from Hippocrates' letter to Damagetus, which is the climax of the epistolary plot and makes up a third of the bulk of the entire series of twenty-seven letters. I will summarize the story nonetheless.

After several introductory letters in which Hippocrates refuses the summons of the king of Persia to cure the plague in that nation, he assents to the plea of the citizens of Abdera to treat the renowned philosopher Democritus, a native of their city. The senate of Abdera writes to Hippocrates

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61. The text and a French translation may be found in Oeuvres d'Hippocrate, ed. E. Littré, tom. IX, Paris, 1861, 308-429. For dating and additional information, v.H. Diels, "Hippokratische Forschungen V", Hermes 53 (1918), 57-87.

that Democritus laughs night and day, that he believes the whole of life to be nothing, and that he tells of voyages in infinite space during which he encounters innumerable Democrituses like himself. The Abderites suggest that he has fallen ill "through the great wisdom which possesses him". From this report Hippocrates diagnoses that Democritus is not really mad, and writes to his host-to-be that it may be the excessive vigour of a mind preoccupied with wisdom that causes Democritus to lose interest in lesser things. Not only melancholics but contemplatives withdraw into themselves, writes Hippocrates. He ventures that the city of Abdera, not Democritus, is ill and requires treatment. In another letter Hippocrates writes that Aesculapius, the god of medicine, has appeared to him in a dream and has withdrawn in favour of Truth herself. Truth also appears to Hippocrates and announces that she dwells with Democritus, Opinion (Doxa) with the Abderites. The transparency of the thematic development is only slightly disguised in the sixteenth letter, in which Hippocrates asks that the usual herbal remedies for madness be prepared. Even here, Hippocrates wishes that a purgative might be found for men's souls like the ones for their bodies.

In the seventeenth letter, Hippocrates relates to Damagetus his visit to Democritus. The Abderites lead Hippocrates to a hill outside the walls of the city where Democritus sits under a tree in the midst of a number of dissected animals meditating and writing. At the sight of him several Abderites cry out, "one like a mother who has lost her child, another like a voyager who has lost his baggage". Hearing their lamentations, Democritus breaks out in laughter. Hippocrates approaches him alone and asks

what he is writing. Democritus replies that he is writing on madness, its nature, causes, and cures, and that he cuts open animals in search of the seat of it. Hippocrates immediately realizes Democritus' sanity and exclaims, "What a reply to the city!". He then asks the cause of Democritus' laughter. Democritus answers:

> I laugh at one thing only, man himself, full of unreason, empty of virtuous actions, suffering great labors for no gain, going to the ends of the earth and down into its infinite depths at the prodding of insatiable desires...[62]

And so begins a panorama of human avarice, inconsistency, and discontent which concludes with a picture of each man laughing at another's folly but none at his own. Hippocrates interrupts to remind Democritus that no one knows or expects that his wishes will be vain. Democritus replies that men who know themselves and the limits of their wills and have learned the mutability of all things will be content with nature and will not seek to extend their knowledge and desires beyond human capacity. Not such men, but those mad with cupidity, cruelty, envy, and the rest of human vices are the object of his laughter, Democritus explains. He then presents another gallery of madmen: merchants, sailors, lovers, kings, figures representative of all trades and stations in life. Democritus confesses his own part in the universal folly: he anatomizes animals in order to find what were better sought in man himself. Hippocrates declares that Democritus has indeed found out the

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62. Oeuvres d'Hippocrate, ed. Littré, IX, p. 361; my translation from the French.

truth of human nature, leaves him, and reports to the Abderites that only Democritus can make men wise.

A brief correspondence ensues between the two men. Democritus sends to Hippocrates his discourse on madness, and Hippocrates replies with a treatise on hellebore. The substance of these letters (which are possibly of different authorship than the preceding) is entirely medical and is drawn from Hippocrates' authentic writings. No further mention is made of the moral causes of madness, and the symptoms listed are those of the physically insane. The last letters of the collection, on the art of medicine and the plague at Athens, are not concerned with the story of Democritus.

The leading themes of the Hippocratic letters are those of popular Cynic moralizing. The series turns on the characteristic Cynic division of the world into the wise and the foolish, and especially on the paradox of wisdom. The Abderites call virtue madness, when it is they who are truly mad. Their madness springs from their pursuit of illusory and insubstantial ends instead of a knowledge of themselves. Scholars have noted parallels with Horace's Satire, 1, 1, also on discontent and the fines quaerendi.[63] Whether or not there exists a common source for both works, it is clear that both Horace and the compiler of the Hippocratic letters draw from a fund of analogies, exempla, and rhetorical poses developed through three centuries of philosophical preaching. The comparison of men to children, and of human life to a disease, the praise of animals, who obey the limits nature

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63. v. Coffey, p. 93, and p. 229, note 40.

sets to appetite, and the tableau of the several ages of man are among the Cynic commonplaces that are collected in Democritus' diatribe against mankind. They are not merely collected, however; they are renewed by the device of the epistolary form and the dramatic setting, and unified by the laughter of Democritus.

We must pause a moment to investigate the character of Democritus, since it was quasi succenturiator Democriti that Burton wrote the Anatomy of Melancholy. We have seen how the genre of the memoir has always been liable to fictional or ideological improvisation. The favourite subjects of early memoirs are the ancient philosophers, though Bion and Menippus in their turn became suitable philosophic protagonists. Of all the transformations wrought by literary invention upon historical figures, none is perhaps more striking than the case of Democritus. He was one of the great natural philosophers of the fifth century B.C., famous for his skill in mathematics and physics and as an originator (with Leucippus) of the atomic theory of matter. The extensive catalogue of his writings given by Diogenes Laertius includes works on physical, ethical, musical, and miscellaneous subjects, but nowhere is mention made of Democritus' laughter. The first extant reference to it is Cicero's (De Oratore 2.58.235), but it is Horace (Epistles II, i, 194-198) who first places it in context:

> si foret in terris, rideret Democritus, seu
> diversum confusa genus panthere camelo
> sive elephans albus volgi converteret ora,
> spectaret populum ludis attentius ipsis
> ut sibi praebentem nimio spectacula plura.

> (Were Democritus still on earth, he would laugh; whether it were some hybrid monster - a panther crossed with a camel - or a white elephant, that drew the eyes of the crowd - he would gaze more intently on the people than the play itself, as giving him more by far worth looking at.)[64]

Democritus' laughter is not a Roman invention, however, and it obviously did not originate with the Hippocratic letters, which do not antedate these references. Though it has been proposed that Democritus' mirth at the expense of mankind may stem from his treatise "On Cheerfulness", Stewart's suggestion that it developed through Cynic handling and transformation of his moral sayings (or sayings attributed to him) is more plausible.[65] According to Stewart, "someone within the general circle of Menippus" is probably responsible for the creation of a laughing Democritus (and of the weeping Heraclitus, who likewise bears little resemblance to the famous philosopher of Ephesus).[66] Thus when Burton assumes the persona of Democritus Jr. in the Anatomy, he may be writing at only one remove from a character developed by Menippus himself.

The representation of the sage is always more problematic than that of the mad. Democritus is not perfectly wise, as he himself realizes. Later versions of his character bring out the ambivalence of his wisdom by making him subject to the disease of melancholy. In the Hippocratic letters,

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64. trans. H.R. Fairclough in the Loeb Satires and Epistles of Horace.

65. Zeph Stewart, "Democritus and the Cynics", Harvard Studies in Classical Philology 63 (1958), 179-91.

66. ibid.

Democritus' wisdom is not that of a self-possessed sage, but that of the gods themselves, for whose laughter at the ways of men Democritus serves as a vessel. Democritus' wisdom is demonic: it "possesses" him; he is "transported" by it; indeed to Hippocrates he "seems a god". Epictetus describes the ideal Cynic as the angel (i.e. messenger) of Zeus who brings the truth down to erring mankind. The freedom of the wise man is thus only apparent, for he serves the gods and is cut off from the life of men. Even Socrates served the oracle of Apollo, and was sentenced to death by his fellow citizens. Only the gods, or in the Christian conception, the angels, can behold the scene of humanity with philosophical comfort.[67] Mortals must bear social exclusion and even mental disease as the price of wisdom. So it is with Democritus and the Renaissance figure of the wise fool. The mortal wise man confident of his own sanity (as Democritus is not) is held up to ridicule in Roman satire. Varro, Horace, and Juvenal all deflate the Stoic sapiens by heaping upon him the grandiose titles of king, only wise, only rich, brave, pure, round, that Cynic and Stoic ethical theory had already granted to him.[68] Burton plays the same game in his satirical

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67. Ben Jonson has beautifully expressed this idea in one stanza of his poem "A Musical Strife in a Pastoral Dialogue", in Works, ed. Herford and Simpson, vol. VIII, pp. 143-44;

> They say the angels mark each deed
> And exercise below,
> And out of inward pleasure feed
> On what they viewing know.

68. v. Varro, Saturae Menippeae, fragment 245; and Horace, Satires, I, 3, 124-25, Epistles I, 1, 106-08.

preface, where his pointed exception of Stoics from melancholy and madness is an ironic attack on their philosophical pride.

Lucian

The writings of Lucian of Samosata, preserved by Byzantine literati, afford an excellent picture of the range of the classical menippea and were the principal models on which the Renaissance revival of the genre was based. Lucian wrote during the second half of the second century A.D. in the period known from the value it placed on rhetoric as the Second Sophistic. In his early days, after acquiring Greek (his native tongue was Syriac), Lucian studied rhetoric and perhaps practiced law. He then put his abilities as a speaker to different use as a professional entertainer. He travelled as far as Gaul reciting speeches in public. When he settled in Athens, he composed the dialogues and narratives on which his fame rests.

Fully eighty-two compositions have come down to us under Lucian's name, including several known to be apocryphal. About a third of these are rhetorical works, including encomia such as Praise of a Fly and sophistic exercises like The Tyrannicide. Although these are not to the modern view Lucian's most imaginative writings, they were as widely read and imitated during the Renaissance as his later and more satirical pieces. A second group of compositions treats a wide variety of subjects in the form of essays or letters. Among these are works of social satire (On Salaried Posts in Great Houses), literary criticism (On the Proper Way to Write

History), philosophy (Toxaris, on friendship), and exposures of particular philosophical and religious quacks (The Death of Peregrinus). The remaining third of Lucian's production are dramatic dialogues and fantastic narratives. Not all of Lucian's satires belong to this category, but it includes all of those that are Menippean in form and inspiration.

Lucian's satirical orientation is not primarily toward philosophy and personal morality in the way that Varro's and Horace's is. His great theme is imposture in all its forms. He ridicules the philosophical schools of his time from the vantage point of a detached scepticism. The practice of abstract logic and the large fees philosophers received for teaching it repel him alike. He is a sharp critic of all religions and superstitions. His debunking of the Greek pantheon is playful, but his satire on mystery cults, false prophets, oracles, and new sects is acerbic. He treats Cynic themes like discontent, the unhappiness of the tyrant and the miser, and the fundamental equality of men. His satires are both topical and bookish, full of 'the present age' but easily transposed to other times.

Lucian's favourite form was the dramatic dialogue. That his contemporaries found it unusual may be judged from the dialogue Twice Accused. There both Dialogue and Oratory bring charges against "the Syrian". Oratory complains that Lucian has deserted her. Lucian replies that Oratory lost her modesty,

> and did not continue to clothe herself in the respectable way that she did once when Demosthenes took her to wife, but made herself up, arranged her hair like a courtesan, put on rouge, and

darkened her eyes underneath.[69]

That is, she was dressing for the Sophists, who practiced an artificial and mannered style not favoured by Lucian. Dialogue's deposition must be quoted in full:

> I was formerly dignified, and pondered upon the gods and nature and the cycle of the universe, treading the air high up above the clouds where "great Zeus in heaven driving his winged car" sweeps on; but he dragged me down when I was already soaring above the zenith and mounting on "heaven's back", and broke my wings, putting me on the same level as the common herd. Moreover, he took away from me the respectable tragic mask that I had, and put another upon me that is comic, satyr-like, and almost ridiculous. Then he unceremoniously penned me up with Jest and Satire and Cynicism and Eupolis and Aristophanes, terrible men for mocking all that is holy and scoffing at all that is right. At last he even dug up and thrust in upon me Menippus, a prehistoric dog, with a very loud bark, it seems, and sharp fangs, a really dreadful dog who bites unexpectedly because he grins when he bites.
>
> Have I not been dreadfully maltreated, when I no longer occupy my proper role but play the comedian and the buffoon and act out extraordinary plots for him? What is most monstrous of all, I have been turned into a surprising blend, for I am neither afoot nor ahorseback, neither prose nor verse, but seem to my hearers a strange phenomenon made up of different elements, like a Centaur.[70]

A better account of the descent and character of Lucian's dialogues, and of Menippean satire itself, would be hard to find. The parodic relation to the tragic and inspired mode of serious philosophical dialogue (in particular to the loftiness of such dialogues as Plato's Phaedrus, which is quoted at the beginning of the passage); the heritage of

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69. trans. A.M. Harmon, the Loeb Lucian, III, p. 143.

70. ibid., pp. 145-47.

free and scolding speech from the Cynics, the iambic poets, Old Comedy, and Menippus; the buffoonery and extraordinary plots; and the stylistic mixture of high and low, prose and verse, are all traits of the Greek spoudogeloion resumed in Lucian's dialogues.

The degree to which Lucian's works are original has been much vexed by scholars.[71] He has been seen as a slavish imitator of Menippus (on very little evidence, of course) and as an originator in his own right. The latter view is more probably correct, although the very notion of originality is easily misapplied to antique authors. The formal innovation that Lucian claims for himself, the dramatic dialogue (without narrative framing) is not a bold one. It is closely related to the techniques of the diatribe and of the Socratic dialogue. Lucian may better be seen as reviving seriocomic dialogue in an age devoted to rhetoric, dialogue's ancient rival. According to the speech of Dialogue in Twice Accused, Lucian "dug up" Menippus. Lucian speaks of learning from the ancients in a way that greatly appealed to Renaissance writers, for whom Lucian himself was an ancient. His writings are full of parodies and pastiches of the classic Greek authors and probably of Menippus himself, but it is from them that he takes off into his own world of comic and satiric fantasy.[72]

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71. J. Bompaire, Lucien Ecrivain, Paris, 1956, pp. 550-62, judiciously arbitrates the controversy. v. also Barbara P. McCarthy, "Lucian and Menippus", Yale Classical Studies 4 (1934), 3-55.

72. v. Bompaire, Lucien Ecrivain, pt. III, "La Création Littéraire".

The prologue to A True Story (or Vera Historia, as it is usually called, out of deference to the popularity of Renaissance Latin translations of Lucian's works) announces the tale to follow as "light, pleasant reading which, instead of merely entertaining, furnishes some intellectual fare as well". Lucian does not propose to gild the pill of philosophy but to blend the amusing and the thoughtful together. He immediately confesses that his story will contain only lies; then he cites some precedents for this practice, among them the works of Homer, Plato, Herodotus and other early historians. These men write pure fable, argues Lucian, so why can't he? He concludes his proemium by affirming that "the one and only truth you'll hear from me is that I am lying".

This prologue may be read not only as a parody of the historian's traditional claim of veracity (in which it closely resembles the opening of Seneca's Apocolocyntosis), but as a reasoned defence of the conventions of Menippean satire.[73] Implicit in the menippea is an epistemological scepticism; Lucian asserts that he "has nothing true to record". Instead of discouraging the raconteur, this defect of knowledge gives free rein to his speculative imagination. If truth breaks into fable beyond the strait of Gibraltar or in the other far-away regions on which Iambulus and Ctesias provide improbable reports, why should Lucian check his fancy nearer home? Even in Athens Plato creates myths of imaginary lands and

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73. ibid., p. 673.

kingdoms. Lucian assumes the same privilege and gathers the best of other fabulists into his pages. His prose is a clever pastiche, at times almost a cento, of episodes and quotations from his models in lying. Having suspended probability, Lucian tells his tale with a straight face. He records details with precision and mimics all the stylistic poses of verisimilitude.

The traveller's tale or anthropologist's account are always potentially satirical, if only because they report possibilities of life that may challenge customary modes and show them to be arbitrary, unnatural, or incomplete. Unlike some of the works that have drawn inspiration from it, More's Utopia and Swift's Gulliver's Travels, for example, Lucian's True Story contains little direct social or intellectual satire. In its various transpositions and inversions of the familiar order of things (on the moon, in the Islands of the Blest, inside the belly of a whale), the element of playful literary fantasy outweighs that of extramundane criticism. In opening itself to every possible shape of thought and action, fantasy unexpectedly performs a function similar to that of experience; both are inextricably combined in the tall tale. Lucian upholds strict standards of truth and falsehood in his essay On the Proper Way to Write History, that is, partial, rhetorical history, not vera historia. Nothing can be excluded from true history, for to limit it in any way is to limit the truth itself, to enclose it in a system, to belie it. The menippea aspires to include all of history, philosophy, and poetry (the three classes of writings which Lucian parodies in A True Story) in a universal language

of the imagination. Joyce's Finnegans Wake, like Vico's New Science, which interprets all of human culture as man's fiction of himself, has this all-encompassing aim. So in its own way does Burton's Anatomy.

Lucian's fancy is harnessed to a single satirical plot in the whimsically titled Icaromenippus. Menippus tells his story to a friend:

> As soon as I began to find, in the course of my investigation of life, that all objects of human endeavour are ridiculous and trivial and insecure (wealth, I mean, and office and sovereign power), contemning those things and assuming that the effort to get them was an obstacle to getting things truly worth effort, I undertook to lift my eyes and contemplate the universe.[74]

Menippus is immediately caused "great perplexity" and resorts to the philosophers in his attempt to unpuzzle the cosmos.

> I put myself in their hands, paying down part of a good round sum on the spot... but they were so far from ridding me of my old-time ignorance that they plunged me forthwith into even greater perplexities by flooding me every day with first causes, final causes, atoms, voids, elements, concepts, and all that sort of thing.[75]

After hearing the conflicting doctrines of the philosophers, Menippus explains to his friend, he decided to fly up to heaven himself. He outfits himself with wings borrowed from two large birds (and from the myth of Daedalus and Icarus). He leaves the earth and arrives on the moon, where he acquires eagle eyesight.

> Bending down toward earth, I clearly saw the cities, the people and all that they were doing, not only

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74. Loeb Lucian, II, 275.

75. ibid., II, 277.

> abroad but at home, when they thought they were unobserved. I saw Ptolemy lying with his sister...[76]

There follows a picture of kings in peril from poisoners and assassins, representatives of the major philosophic schools in positions of moral jeopardy, and more: "In brief, it was a motley and manifold spectacle". Menippus goes on to compare the scene below him to the features on the shield of Achilles in the Iliad. Shifting his simile to a comparison of men to players on a stage, a favourite theme of Bion's, Menippus imagines all of humanity singing in discord and dancing at cross-purposes until the stage manager drives them off and "all are quiet alike".

> But there in the playhouse itself, full of variety and shifting spectacles, everything that took place was truly laughable.[77]

After laughing his fill, Menippus leaves the moon for the Heavens themselves. As he departs, the moon speaks up to request that Zeus forbid the erring speculations of the astronomers concerning her nature. Menippus is admitted to the court of Zeus, who complains of the decline of his worship by mortals. Menippus listens with Zeus to the prayers of men as they arrive through an orifice beside his throne. They have been heard before in the menippea. The representation of Zeus as an Olympian bureaucrat arranging for a thousand bushels of hail to fall on Cappadocia, annihilating Hermodorus the Epicurean, and processing the petitions of mortals, however, is Lucian's own invention. A council of the gods is convened to consider the race of philosophers. Zeus

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77. ibid., II, 299.

indicts them on charges of logic-chopping and moral hypocrisy and to the acclamation of the assembly promises to hurl a thunderbolt at them. Hermes bears Menippus back to the earth. The plot of Icaromenippus, probably deriving from Menippus himself, gave rise to numerous imitations. Its mainspring, as in Apuleius' Metamorphoses, is intellectual quest, and the scene of Menippus' "investigation of life", as often in the menippea, is the cosmos itself.

Bakhtin writes that the menippea typically exhibits a tri-levelled construction.[78] Just as the Menippean note is nearly always audible above the sphere of the moon, so too it echoes through the underworld. If Socrates first prophesied the genre of the dialogue of the dead, the form owes its popularity in European literature to its development by Lucian. From the heavens, all men seem like players; in Hades, they appear as they really are, stripped of their roles and their masks. The 'dialogue on the threshold' takes place not at the heavenly gates but on the gangway of Charon's ferry. Those recently deceased who have left the world above reluctantly demur at boarding Charon's boat. The tyrant bewails his loss of life and power, but the poor cobbler Micyllus comes aboard willingly and cheerfully. Each man is tested and his worldly illusions pared away as he is compelled to become a shade. Worldly roles are reversed: Micyllus wears purple robes, and Alexander mends shoes. The Cynic heroes are in their element in Hades, and their laughter, like Menippus' from the moon and Democritus' in his

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78. Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, p. 95.

garden, sets the tone of Lucian's satire. The afterlife of Lucian himself will concern us in the next chapter.

Julian, Martianus, and Boethius

The last satire of the classical period to be written wholly within the Menippean tradition is Julian the Apostate's Symposium or Caesares of the mid-fourth century.[79] Though written in Greek and containing few verses, it is modelled principally on the Apocolocyntosis of Seneca. The twelve Caesars are summoned before Silenus in a court below the moon. The satire was written before Julian himself became emperor of Rome. Julian also wrote the Menippean Misopogon ('The Beard-hater'), against the licentiousness of the inhabitants of Antioch.

Two works of late antiquity, Martianus Capella's De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii (early fifth century) and Boethius' De Consolatione Philosophiae (early sixth century) are of interest both for what they preserve of the classical menippea and for what they omit or transform. Martianus' encyclopedia of the liberal arts takes its combination of prose and verse and its verbal license, but nothing else, from the menippea. Its verse interludes, florid language, and elaborate allegory are devices designed to make a didactic work pleasant to read. In essence, Martianus' systematization

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79. Otto Weinrich, Römische Satiren, Zurich, 1949, ICX-CIV briefly discusses Julian's works and sketches a history of Menippean satire into the Renaissance.

of knowledge is antithetical to the intellectual inconclusiveness of the classical menippea. The same passion for enclosing knowledge in systems that made De Nuptiis such a popular work in the middle ages discouraged the expression of certain of the menippea's philosophical themes.

Boethius' De Consolatione is closer in spirit to earlier Menippean satire. The Greek diatribe, with its lively defense of slavery, exile, and poverty, and its contempt of Fortune's gifts, had expressed the themes of consolation in a seriocomic style. The Christian Boethius turned to this tradition of consolation in his prosimetric dialogue with Philosophy.[80] Although Bakhtin considers De Consolatione a serious work, he finds what he calls "reduced laughter" in it, by which he means relativity without jolliness.[81] What seem to be great losses to the fallen Boethius are belittled by the sage counsels of Philosophy. She turns the world upsidedown: this is the Menippean paradox of wisdom. De Consolatione Philosophiae was not only a seminal work for the Middle Ages but extended its influence through the Renaissance.

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80. C.S. Lewis, The Discarded Image, Cambridge, 1964, pp. 75-90, discusses the probable reasons for Boethius' decision to seek the consolations of Philosophy instead of (or in addition to) those of Christianity. He also provides information on Boethius' influence on later writers. Yet he wonders why 'Satira Menippea' was never revived by a Newman, an Arnold, or a Landor (whose Imaginary Conversations are indeed Menippean dialogues of the dead).

81. Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, p. 93.

Both Martianus' and Boethius' works combine prose and verse. In them and in the medieval works that draw upon them, however, the prosimetrum ceases to be a vehicle for parody and playful shifts of style. Its use in works as various as Dante's Vita Nuova, Bernard Silvestris' De Contemptu Mundi, the French chantefable, and later in Sannazaro's and Sidney's Arcadias, no longer reflects the practice of the Greek and Roman menippea. The Menippean prosimetrum is revived during the Renaissance, partly through antiquarian zeal and partly because it again answers to the genre's proclivity for parti-coloured robes. In itself, however, the mixture of prose and verse no more earmarks a work as Menippean than the use of dialogue or the inclusion of a banquet scene.

A Summary

It is time now to summarize our discussion of Menippean satire in antiquity. What are the discursive properties of the genre? Bakhtin has codified them; I follow his numbered listing.[82]

(1) The comic element is always present to a greater or lesser extent. (2) The menippea is characterized by "extraordinary freedom of philosophical invention and of invention within the plot". (3) The element of the fantastic is introduced in order to create extraordinary situations

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82. ibid., pp. 93-95.

in which to test the truth and its bearers. (4) The "organic combination of philosophical dialogue, lofty symbolism, fantastic adventure, and underworld naturalism" is characteristic. (5) "The menippea is a genre of ultimate questions" and of "philosophical universalism". (6) The action is often "transferred from earth to Olympus and to the nether world". (7) "Experimental fantasticality", for example observation from an unusual point of view, is common. (8) "Moral-psychological experimentation", i.e. the representation of unusual psychic states, appears. (9) Scandalous, eccentric, and incongruous behaviour and speech are characteristic. (10) Sharp contrasts and oxymoronic combinations in language and character are frequent. (11) Elements of social utopia are often present. (12) The menippea often incorporates other genres, "with various degrees of parody and objectivization". (13) Variety of styles and tones, as in the mixture of prose and verse, is characteristic. (14) "A journalistic, publicistic, feuilletonistic, and pointedly topical quality" is typical.

Such, according to Bakhtin, are the fourteen unmistakable marks of the classical menippea. The foregoing historical review of the genre has confirmed them. Is there any principle by which such seemingly heterogeneous characteristics can be unified? Bakhtin maintains that the great "external plasticity" of the menippea is combined with an "inner integrity". He finds the key to the menippea in the rituals of the folk carnival. The thematic aspects of the menippea

reflect the "jolly relativity" that is the "carnival attitude to the world", and its formal generic characteristics derive from the elements of carnival celebrations.

Bakhtin's arguments are fascinating; one cannot help but prick up one's ears (as Folly invites her listeners to do) as one reads them. But there are problems. One must become suspicious when Bakhtin criticizes Lucian for not understanding the character of the carnival images he employs: they "always defy his intentions... he uses a tradition, but its value and quality are almost forgotten by him".[83] One's suspicions are confirmed in Bakhtin's reading of Rabelais in Rabelais and His World. This book contains a brilliant treatment of Rabelais' language but fails to place Rabelais in the context of the revival of learning - except insofar as the Renaissance itself is seen as the triumph of the gay carnival spirit over the sober seriousness of the Middle Ages. Bakhtin contrasts the rhetorical, bookish, and official episodes in Rabelais (he cites Gargantua's education, the Abbey of Thelème, Pantagruel's speech on law and his letter to Gargantua) with the predominantly comic episodes.[84] Even in discussing the chapters on Gargantua's education, Bakhtin chooses to emphasize the evidence they present of Rabelais' familiarity with the occupations of the marketplace rather than their exposition

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83. Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, trans. Helen Iswolsky, Cambridge, Mass., 1968, p. 207.

84. ibid., for example, p. 30; pp. 158-59; pp. 453-54.

of his humanist programme. Scholarship since 1940 (the date of Bakhtin's study) has demonstrated how pervasive in Rabelais' works are the themes that receive their most explicit treatment in the episodes Bakhtin mentions as exceptions to Rabelais' prevailing tone. Even the most broadly comic episodes and those whose images are most traditional are now seen to disclose arguments in favour of the various legal, moral, and religious ideals that Rabelais advocated. One must be cautious therefore in accepting Bakhtin's analysis of the sophisticated literary techniques of Menippean satire in terms of carnival and folk humour. At this point it is best to leave unsolved the riddle of the "organic interrelatedness" of the menippea's Protean shapes and to let Casaubon's definition (itself an oxymoron) suffice: philosophia ludens.

If one had only one last breath of life (in the manner of a Menippean dialogue on the threshold) in which to describe the Anatomy of Melancholy to mankind, one might say that it was the work written by the Clerk of the Oxford Market (in which capacity Burton served from 1615 to 1618) when, after overseeing by day the manifold affairs of men in the busy market square, he turned in his evenings to surveying the contents of his library in order to relieve his idleness and his melancholy. It would be tempting (in such circumstances) to see in Burton's pages the carnivalization of the Bodleian[85]

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85. The metaphor of carnival has in fact been attached to Burton's Anatomy, by Hippolyte Taine, Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise, Paris, 1930, III, 130-31: "c'est un carnaval d'idées et de phrases".

- but perhaps it would be foolish - then again, in folly there is sometimes wisdom. These are the questions that the menippea raises. We shall see if they may be answered by a consideration of the genre in the Renaissance.

CHAPTER THREE

MENIPPEAN SATIRE IN THE RENAISSANCE

Between the time of Boethius and that of the fifteenth and sixteenth-century imitators of Lucian, the menippea falls apart as a literary genre. Certain of its elements survive or are evolved anew, but without reference to classical precedent. For example, the medieval combination of jest and earnest, particularly in the pulpit, recalls Greek popular philosophical preaching, with which, as I have noted, the Christian sermon has historical connections.[1] Christian narrative genres such as the lives of saints employ plot devices developed in the antique menippea and are themselves not without unexpected comic touches.[2] The poems of the wandering scholars abound in Biblical parodies, just as the menippea does in Homeric.[3] The medieval *soties* have their roots in the ancient mimes, close dramatic cousins of the menippea. The medieval celebration of

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1. E.R. Curtius, *European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages*, pp. 417-435, discusses jest and earnest in medieval literature and observes that in the Christian preaching of the late Middle Ages, as for Horace, jesting serves the purpose of *ridendo dicere verum*.

2. ibid., on "Jest in Hagiography"; v. also Bahktin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 112.

3. v. Paul Lehmann, *Die Parodie im Mittelalter*, Munich, 1922, and enlarged with selected texts, Stuttgart, 1963.

carnival is descended from the Roman Saturnalia, which furnished certain Menippean themes to the classical satirists. When one searches for survivals and analogies, they are everywhere, but they do not comprise a living literary tradition.

According to Bakhtin, the tradition of folk humour is not only the fons et origo of the classical menippea, but the means of its historical continuity as well. He states that "a millenium of folk humour broke into Renaissance literature".[4] The point, however, is debatable. Is it not rather the culture of classical antiquity that "breaks into Renaissance literature" after a millenium of medieval ignorance? Should not the origins of Renaissance Menippean satire be sought in the recovery of the literary heritage of Greece and Rome? The question of the degree to which specifically medieval elements persist in the literature of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries is a perennial problem of historical scholarship. The Renaissance fostered both the recovery of the classical tongues and the development of the European vernaculars; it moved men both to imitate Greek and Roman authors and to raise the level of native, sometimes subliterary tradition. Though not to the exclusion of medieval influences, and frequently in the service of Christian ideals, I think it

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4. Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, p.72.

can be shown that the outpouring of Menippean satire in the Renaissance is primarily a consequence of the revival of the literature and philosophy of antiquity.

There exists no general or comparative study of the seriocomic literature of the Renaissance or of Renaissance Menippean satire.[5] No attempt can be made here to treat thoroughly a literary phenomenon that spreads in Latin and the vernaculars from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century and beyond to the present day. It is essential to an understanding of Burton's Anatomy, however, to outline the Renaissance conception and practice of Menippean satire. Not every point of my outline bears directly on the Anatomy; nor is it possible to discuss all that do, e.g. collections of learned jests such as Caspar Dornavius' vast

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5. Single authors have of course been studied with respect to their sources and influence, but not usually in a wider generic context. Bakhtin's Rabelais and His World considers the serio-comic literature of sixteenth-century France against the background of the medieval and Renaissance carnival and traces the history of the Grotesque in European literature. J. Ijsewijn, "Neo-Latin Satire: Sermo and Satyra Menippea", Classical Influences on European Literature 1500-1700, ed. R. Bolgar, Cambridge, 1975, 41-53, makes a partial survey of the Latin material in which he limits himself to satires whose titles or subtitles contain the word sermo or satyra. E. Korkowski, "Donne's Ignatius and Menippean Satire", Studies in Philology 72 (1975), 419-438, discusses the Renaissance background of Donne's satire. The practice of serio ludere was not confined in the Renaissance and seventeenth century to comic writing; Frank J. Warnke, Versions of Baroque, New Haven, 1972, for example, sees it as an essential trait of Baroque poetic style. V. infra, note 48, on a philosophic application of serio ludere by the Italian Neo-platonists.

Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Socraticae Joco-seriae[6] or Caspar von Barth's Amphitheatrum Seriorum Jocorum,[7] from which Burton took quotations and anecdotes.

Some Definitions and Some Lists

It was not until the latter part of the sixteenth century, with Justus Lipsius' Satyra Menippea Somnium, lusus in nostri aevi criticos (Antwerp, 1581), that Menippean satires came to be written as such in the Renaissance. Varro's Menippean fragments were not collected in print until 1564,[8] though they had earlier appeared embedded in Nonius Marcellus' De compendiosa doctrina, where they are preserved, and had been quoted by Erasmus in the Adages. Lipsius had made his own collection of the fragments by 1575 but did not publish them.[9] The infrequent mention of Menippean satire in sixteenth-century criticism is probably due to a lack of familiarity with Varro's Saturae Menippeae

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6. Hanover, 1619.

7. Hanau, 1613.

8. In his edition of Varro's Saturae Menippeae (Quedlinburg, 1844), F. Oehler cites Robertus and Henricus Stephanus' Fragmenta poetarum veterum latinorum (Faggeri typographus, 1564, pp. 305ff) as the first printed collection of Varro's Menippeans, p.14.

9. ibid., p.17. Lipsius provides this information in his Electorum Liber, Antwerp, 1575.

and to Quintilian's failure to mention "the other kind" of satire by name in the Institutio Oratoria.[10]

In 1594, the "printer" of the celebrated Satyre Menippée (almost certainly one of its authors)[11] found it necessary to explain both terms of the curious title of the work in an address to the reader. He claims that failure to understand the title:

> ne peut tomber qu'aux esprits ignorants: car tous ceux qui sont nourris aux lettres sçavent bien que le mot de satyre ne signifie pas seulement un poème de mesdisance pour reprendre les vices publics ou particuliers de quelqu'un, commes celles de Lucilius, Horace, Juvenal et Perse, mais aussy toute sorte d'escrits remplis de diverses choses et de divers arguments, meslez de proses et de vers entrelardez, comme entremets de langues de boeuf salées. Varron dit qu'on appeloit ainsy anciennement une façon de patisserie ou de farce ou l'on mettoit plusieurs sortes d'herbages et de viandes.[12]

Of the four etymologies for the word 'satire' (satura) recorded by the Roman grammarian Diomedes, that taken from Varro (De Lingua Latina), which derives satire from the name of a stuffed sausage, is most generally accepted by modern scholars.[13] The author of the "Discours de l'Impri-

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10. Institutio Oratoria X, i, 95: alterum illud etiam prius saturae genus, sed non sola carminum varietate mixtum condidit T. Varro.

11. The authors of the Satyre Menippée, Pierre Le Roy, Pierre Pithou, Nicolas Rapin, Florent Chrestien, Jacques Gillot, and Jean Passerat, were scholars as well as patriots. Passerat, French and Latin poet, érudit, professor of Eloquence at the Collège Royal de France, and author of a commentary on Rabelais destroyed by Passerat himself before his death, is likeliest to have written the "Discours de l'Imprimeur". v. La Satyre Menippée, ed. Ch. Marcilly, Paris, 1889, p. xviii.

12. La Satyre Menippée ou La Vertu du Catholicon, ed. Ch. Read, Paris, 1900, pp. 11-12.

13. M. Coffey, op.cit., pp. 12-16.

meur" points out that in this sense it applies to miscellaneous, prosimetric satire as well as to the hexameters of Lucilius and his successors. But he prefers another of Diomedes' etymologies:

> Mais j'estime que le nom vient des Grecs, qui introduisoient sur les eschafauts, aux festes publiques, des hommes deguisez en Satyres, qu'on feignoit estre demy-dieux lascifs et folastres par les forests... Et ces hommes, ainsy deguisez, nuds et barbouillez, avoient pris une liberté d'attaquer et brocarder tout le monde impunement.[14]

Most sixteenth-century discussions of the nature of satire are based on this false etymology, which derives the word 'satyre' (as it was spelled in French and English, satyra in Latin) from the Greek σάτυρος , satyr.[15] It was supposed that the Roman satura of Horace and Juvenal was descended from Greek dramas in which men dressed as satyrs reprehended vice "in rough and bitter speaches", as Puttenham says.[16] Not until Casaubon's treatise of 1605 was this ancient error, already current in the fourth century grammarian Donatus, exploded. In the meantime it had strongly coloured critical discussion of satire and in the English verse satires of the 1590's had licensed an abusive tone and an

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14. La Satyre Menippée, ed. Read, p. 12.

15. V. J.W. Joliffe, "Satyre: Satura: ΣΑΤΥΡΟΣ, A Study in Confusion", Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance XVIII (1956), 84-95.

16. George Puttenham, Arte of English Poesie, ed. D.G. Wilcock and A. Waller, Cambridge, 1936, p. 26.

uncouth style.[17]

The "Discours de l'Imprimeur" summarizes:

> Ce n'est donc pas sans raison qu'on a intitulé ce petit discours du nom de Satyre, encore qu'elle soit escrite en prose, mais farcie et remplie d'ironies gaillardes, piquantes toutefois et mordantes le fond de la conscience de ceux qui s'y sentent attaquez, auxquels on dit leur veritez; mais, au contraire, faisants esclater de rire ceux qui ont l'ame innocente et assurée de n'avoir point desvoyé du bon chemin.[18]

Verses were in fact "entrelardez" in later editions, but as the author of the "Discours" realizes, they are only one among several elements of the stuffing of Menippean satire. The "ironies gaillardes" with which the Satyre Menippée is "farcie et remplie", foreign to the English satire of this period, are an integral part of its presentation.

No more than 'Satyre' is the name 'Menippée' a novelty, asserts the learned printer. Varro called his satires Menippean:

> à cause de Menippus, philosophe cynique, qui en avait fait de pareilles auparavant luy, toutes pleines de brocards salez et de gausseries saulpoudrées de bons mots, pour rire et pour mettre aux champs les hommes vitieux de son temps.[19]

Petronius, Lucian, and Apuleius are noted as having written in this fashion, "et, de nostre temps, le bon Rabelais, qui a passé tous les autres en rencontres et belles

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17. A.Kernan, The Cankered Muse, New Haven, 1959, pp. 54-63, discusses the effect of Elizabethan satiric theory on satiric practice.

18. La Satyre Menippée, ed. Read, pp. 12-13.

19. ibid., p.13.

robineries" and on whose prologues the "Discours de l'Imprimeur" is styled. Following their example,

> on a voulu donner a un ouvrage semblable un tiltre semblable au leur, qui s'est faict commun et appellatif, au lieu qu'il estoit auparavant propre et particulier; comme, n'a pas long temps, en a usé un docte Flamand antiquaire.[20]

In other words, Varro's title is no longer his own (or Menippus') but the name of a genre of satire. The "docte Flamand antiquaire" who has recently used it thus is Lipsius. Although Menippean authors, pre-eminently Lucian, had been widely imitated earlier in the century, here, I believe, is the first formulation of Menippean satire as a modern as well as an ancient genre.

The description of Menippean satire prefixed to the Satyre Menippée may be compared with others of the seventeenth century. In his Discourse on the Original and Progress of Satire (1693), Dryden devotes several pages to a discussion of Menippean satire. With Casaubon, from whose De Satyrica Graecorum Poesi & Romanorum Satira he draws many of his remarks, Dryden calls the genre Varronian satire. He cites Cicero's Academics and Quintilian and states:

> that Varro was one of those writers whom they called σπουδαγέλοιοι , studious of laughter... And he entitled his own satires Menippean; not that Menippus had written any satires (for his were either dialogues or epistles), but that Varro imitated his style, his manner, and his facetiousness... But Varro, in imitating him, avoids his impudence and filthiness, and only expresses his witty pleasantry.

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20. ibid., pp. 13-14.

> This we may believe for certain, that as his subjects were various, so most of them were tales or stories of his own invention. Which is also manifest from antiquity, by those authors who are acknowledged to have written Varronian satires, in imitation of his; of whom the chief is Petronius Arbiter... Many of Lucian's dialogues may also properly be called Varronian satires, particularly his True History; and consequently the Golden Ass of Apuleius, which is taken from him. Of the same stamp is the mock deification of Claudius, by Seneca: and the Symposium or Caesars of Julian, the Emperor.[21]

Beyond some further conjectural observations on the character of Menippus, this is the sum of Dryden's remarks on the classical menippea. His gloss of spoudogeloios, "studious of laughter", is misleading, particularly when compared with Casaubon's explanation of the term.[22] Of more interest is the list of works that follows:

> Amongst the moderns, we may reckon the Encomium Moriae of Erasmus, Barclay's Euphormio, and a volume of German authors... In the English, I remember none which are mixed with prose, as Varro's were; but of the same kind is Mother Hubbard's Tale, in Spenser; and (if it be not too vain to mention anything of my own), the poems of Absalom and MacFleckno.[23]

Erasmus' Moriae Encomium (1509) is a mock-encomium with dramatic framing that contains broad intellectual and social satire. The Euphormionis Lusini Satyricon (1603) by the Scotsman John Barclay is a roman à clef in loose imitation of Petronius.[24] Spenser's Mother Hubbard's Tale is a

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21. Essays of John Dryden, ed. W.P. Ker, Oxford, 1900, vol. II, pp. 66-67.

22. Discussed supra, pp. 34-35.

23. Dryden, p.67.

24. In the introduction to his recent edition and translation of Barclay's Satyricon, Nieuwkoop, 1973, David Fleming, S.J., notes its kinship with Petronius and Menippean Satire, xvi.

satirical poem in rhyming couplets about a fox and an ape in the manner of a medieval beast fable. Dryden's two poems are both narratives that play off their sources in the Bible and in epic, respectively. Coming to discuss burlesque verse later in his discourse, Dryden also includes Samuel Butler's Hudibras among modern Varronian satires.

What is it, according to Dryden, that ties these works to each other and to the antique menippea? The most one can gather from his cursory remarks is that he considers them all "tales or stories" invented by their authors with the intent of ridiculing vice by means of wit. Relative to formal verse satire, Menippean satire does make greater use of fable and parody, but as distinguishing properties of the genre, these qualities are too general for critical use. Perhaps the most striking feature of Dryden's discussion is the mere fact that he recognizes his own two finest poems as Varronian satires, though it is not clear precisely on what grounds he does so. Both poems employ the favorite Menippean device of transposing plots and characters from elevated works to the contemporary scene. In Absalom and Achitophel the aptness, in Mac Fleckno the incongruity of this procedure creates the witty effect.

Dryden's list of moderns may be set with others from contexts not specifically critical. Condemning ad hominem ridicule in the subsection "Scoffs, Calumnies, bitter Jests, how they cause Melancholy", Burton excepts from blame:

> such as generally tax vice, Barclay, Gentilis, Erasmus, Agrippa, Fischartus, etc., the Varronists and Lucians of our time. (I, 343)

The work of Agrippa of Nettesheim undoubtedly in Burton's mind is his De Incertitudine et Vanitate Scientiarum et Artium (1530). Johann Fischart made a free translation of Rabelais into German in 1575. Alberius Gentilis, a religious exile from Italy and Regius professor of Civil Law at Oxford from 1587, wrote many legal and controversial, but no satirical works, with the possible exception of Mundus Alter et Idem (1605), usually attributed to Joseph Hall. Even if Gentilis was not the author of this work (and some have thought he was), he clearly had something to do with its publication.[25] It is probable that Burton has Mundus Alter et Idem in mind, a work he knew well, and that he believed "Mercurius Britannicus", whose name appears on the title page as author, to be the pseudonym of Gentilis. In any event, Mundus Alter et Idem is a traveller's fantasy, inspired by Rabelais and Lucian's True Story. Elsewhere in the same subsection Burton names other Menippeans past and present:

> There was never wanting a Petronius, a Lucian in those times, nor will be a Rabelais, an Euphormio, a Boccalinus in ours. (I, 339)

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25. E. A. Petherick, "Mundus Alter et Idem", Gentleman's Magazine CCLXXXI (July, 1896), 66-87, discusses Gentilis' career and the inconclusive evidence for his authorship. Huntingdon Brown, in his introduction to John Healey's English translation of 1609, Cambridge, Mass., 1937, xxvii-xxviii, establishes Hall's authorship on internal evidence but fails to account for contemporary attributions of the work to Gentilis. Burton's reference is noted in neither study.

All of Rabelais' fictional works (1532-1552) may be considered Menippean satires. Trajano Boccalini's Ragguagli di Parnasso (1612-13) is a series of two-hundred news reports from Parnassus telling of interviews between Apollo and various historical figures living and dead. Boccalini's violently anti-Spanish work spawned English translations and adaptations in the 1620's,[26] among them William Vaughn's Golden Fleece (1626), in which Democritus Jr. briefly appears.[27] Burton does not call the writers whom he cites here Menippean, but the parallels he draws between ancient and modern satirists suggest that he was aware of the generic filiation between their works.

Although Burton knew and quoted from the works of all the authors he names (Fischart only excepted), it is likely that he has taken his lists from another writer. To a greater degree than is usually realized, Burton often borrows or paraphrases without acknowledgement. His source in this case is probably the two chapters of J.V. Andreae's Mythologia Christiana entitled "Canes" and "Classis", which also review the ranks of Renaissance satire.[28] Andreae praises:

> ... Lucianum, Merlinum, Rabelasium, Fischartum, Bocalinum, Barclajum, Pasquinum, Gentilem & consimiles satyricos canes, quod feras undique consectarentur...[29]

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26. v. W.F. Marquardt, "The First English Translations of Trajano Boccalini's Ragguagli di Parnasso", Huntingdon Library Quarterly XV (1951-52), 1-19.

27. v. supra, p.4.

28. J.V. Andreae, Mythologia Christiana, Strasburg, 1619.

29. ibid., p.238.

Changing his metaphor, he then compares "Joh. Gailerus Kaisersberg... Des. Erasm. Roterodamus... Corn. Aggrippa... An. Seneca, Thomas Morus, Sebastian. Franc., Fr. Rabelais"[30] to commanders of a fleet sailing to liberate the shores of Narragonia (the destination of Sebastian Brandt's ship of fools). "Merlinus" is Teofilo Folegno, author of the Merlini Cocaii Macaronicon (1517), which influenced Rabelais. "Pasquin" was the pseudonym of various anti-Catholic authors, including Caelius Secundus Curio, whose Pasquillus Ecstaticus (1544) is modelled on Lucian's Menippus. "Joh, Gailerus Kaisersberg" wrote satires in support of Luther's Reformation. Erasmus owes his place as lieutenant of Andreae's fleet not only to the Praise of Folly but also to Julius exclusus a caelo (1513-14) and the Colloquies. More is included for Utopia (1516), if not also for his epigrams. Andreae was a Utopian writer himself, an evangelical Christian, a vehement Protestant, and a satirist (he had published Menippus sive Dialogorum Centuria in 1618). Sebastian Franck translated the Praise of Folly into German (1533) and wrote Paradoxa (1534) which demonstrate the folly of the world. The inclusion of Seneca and Lucian in Andreae's lists is of interest, for it shows that he is thinking of the Renaissance writers he names in association with classical Menippean authors.

As a stylist, Andreae has a penchant for catalogues that exceeds even Burton's. In the dialogue "Alethea

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30. ibid., p.239.

Exul" ('Truth the Exile'), printed in Mythologia Christiana, he names fully twenty-six "Veritatis Testes" and their works. The list includes mock-encomia, Lucianic adventures to hell and heaven, and Lipsius' and others' "Menippean Satires", among other kinds of Renaissance seriocomic writing.[31] The Truth to which these works collectively bear witness is criticism of their times, if not also the very combination of jest and earnest.

In the preface to the Praise of Folly, Erasmus anticipates the charge that he is reviving Old Comedy and Lucian by countering with the examples of others who have mixed "frivolity and fun in a thesis" (argumenti leuitas et ludicrum).[32] He names Homer, Virgil, and Ovid (the light poems ascribed to these three ancients were still considered authentic); Polycrates, Isocrates, Glauco, Favorinus, Synesius, and Lucian as authors of mock-encomia; Seneca for his "Apotheosis" and Plutarch for his dialogue between Gryllus and Ulysses; Lucian and Apuleius for their stories about the ass; and the anonymous last will and testament of a piglet. Most of these authors contribute very little

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31. In her support Alethea names: "Lutheri Comitia picarum, Melancthonis Didymum, Erasmi Julium, Curionis Ecstaticum, Fraxinei Hinnulum, Vergerii Actiones, D. Eberhardi Wirtenbergiensis Dimnam, Gentilis Australem Terram, Barclaij Euphormionem, Reuchlini Obscuros, Hutteni Dialogos... Erasmi Moriam & Cicernoianum, Mori Utopiam, Lipsii Somnium, Heinsij Herculem, Cunaei Sardos Venales, Ochini Apologus, Holderi Asinum avem, &c. Schoperi Reiniken, Rolhagij Batrachomyomachiam, Stephani Apologiam, Senecae Claudi, Frischlini Priscianum, Naogeorgi Jeremiam, Cardani Neronem, Fischardi Rhytmos, admiranda plane opuscula". Mythologia Christiana, p.342.

32. Erasmus, Praise of Folly, trans. B. Radice, Penguin Books, 1971, p.57 (all English translations from the Praise of Folly will be taken from this edition). The text of Erasmus' letter to More is taken from Opus Epistolarum Desiderii Erasmi Roteodami, ed. P.S. Allen, Oxford, 1906-1958 (hereafter cited as EE), vol. I, no.222,1,29 (p.460).

to the Praise of Folly; one, Lucian, outweighs all the rest.

> Tantum obtinet in dicendo gratiae, tantum in inueniendo felicitatis, tantum in iocando leporis, in mordendo aceti, sic titillat allusionibus, sic seria nugis, nugas seriis miscet; sic ridens vera dicit, vera dicendo ridet; sic hominum mores, affectus, studia quasi pencillo depingit, neque legenda sed plane spectanda oculis exponit, ut nulla comoedia, nulla satyra cum huius dialogis conferri debeat, seu voluptatem spectes, seu vtilitatem.
>
> (So great is his success in saying what is pleasing, in hitting upon the happiest expression, in gamesome joking and in bitter biting, so does he tease with allusions, so mix serious matters with trifles, trifling with serious things; so does he laugh and speak the truth together; so does he depict, as with an etcher's point, the habits, emotions, and desires of men, not merely to be read but to be seen with the eye, that no comedy, no satire, may be compared with his dialogues, whether you consider pleasure or utility.)[33]

So Erasmus wrote to the English churchman Christopher Urswick in the dedication to his translation of Lucian's Gallus in 1506. Erasmus' hyperbole was prophetic: no author exercised as great an influence on the satire of the Renaissance as Lucian. All the sixteenth and seventeenth-century writers named above owe something to him. His place in Renaissance literature must be reviewed.[34]

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33. Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami Opera Omnia, Amsterdam, 1969-, I-1, p.471; my translation.

34. Craig R. Thompson's "Lucian and Lucianism in the English Renaissance" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Princeton, 1937), provides a review of the European influence of Lucian to 1550 which takes account of earlier literature on the subject. He also includes a bibliography of printed translations and editions of Lucian to 1550. Lucian's influence on French literature, omitted from Thompson's study, is discussed by L. Schenk, Lukian und die franzosische Literatur im Zeitalter der Aufklärung, Munich, 1931, and by C.A. Mayer, "Satire in French Literature from 1525 to 1560", diss., University of London, 1949, pp. 379-449.

Lucian and His Imitators

It is easy to receive the impression that Lucian was discovered by Erasmus and More, so effective was their advocacy of his writings and contagious the example of their own Lucianic works. In fact, however, several of Lucian's works had been translated into Latin by the Italian Guarino of Verona during a visit to Constantinople in 1403-08, one hundred years before Erasmus and More made their first renderings. In the fifteenth century, Lucian was in vogue with Italian humanists; in the sixteenth, with those of the North. Manuscripts first reached Italy through the offices of Giovanni Aurispa, who also translated several works. Poggio, Filelfo, and Rinucci Aretino, among others, made translations into Latin which were printed in northern as well as Italian cities. Alberti and Boiardo produced Italian versions of De Calumnia and Timon, respectively. Pontano imitated Lucian in Latin in his own dialogues of the dead and in other satirical dialogues in prose and verse. In these works clerics are satirized, a wise man is sought for, and grammatical and critical problems are debated. Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, later Pope Pius II, drew from Lucian's De iis qui mercede conductis degunt and Menippus in his letter De Miseriis Curialium. Later Popes were not to find Lucian so congenial.

Among northern humanists, Rudolph Agricola made early

translations of Lucian, which were not published until 1530, forty-five years after his death. Johannes Reuchlin translated the twelfth dialogue of the dead into German in 1495. In 1496, the editio princeps of Lucian in Greek was published in Florence. Seven years later the Aldine press in Venice brought out another edition, which was more widely disseminated. This was the edition that Erasmus and More probably used when they collaborated at translating Lucian at More's house in Chelsea in 1505-06.[35] At this time both Erasmus and More had only recently mastered Greek, and it was partly for practice that they undertook to translate Lucian. Lucian's "graceful, vivid, pleasant, and copious style" (as Erasmus describes it) was especially suitable for Latin imitation. They had other reasons too for translating Lucian, which they expressed in the dedicatory letters to their published versions. Erasmus wrote seven dedications to various civil and ecclesiastical authorities English and continental; More addressed a single letter to Thomas Ruthall, the Royal Secretary. The dedications are of interest, for in them we may observe Erasmus and More pointing the way to themselves that led to the Praise of Folly and Utopia in the years to follow.

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35. The Complete Works of St. Thomas More, vol.3, 1, "Translations of Lucian", ed. C.R. Thompson, New Haven, 1974, xxxix-xl. v. also: C.R. Thompson, The Translations of Lucian by Erasmus and St. Thomas More, Ithaca, 1940; H.A. Mason, Humanism and Poetry in Tudor England, London, 1959, pp. 59-73; Christopher Robinson ed., Erasmi Opera Omnia, Amsterdam, 1969, I-1, pp. 363-77; J.A.K. Thomson, "Erasmus in England", Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg, Berlin, 1930-31, 64-82.

More opens his letter to Ruthall with these words:

> Si quisquam fuit unquam uir doctissime, qui Horatianum praeceptum impleuerit, voluptatemque cum utilitate coniunxerit, hoc ego certe Lucianum in primis puto praestitisse. Qui & superciliosis abstinens Philosophorum praeceptis, & solutioribus Poetarum lusibus, honestissimis simul & facetissimis salibus, uitia ubique notat atque insectatur mortalium.
>
> (If most learned Sir, there was ever anyone who fulfilled the Horatian maxim and combined delight with instruction, I think Lucian certainly ranked among the foremost in this respect. Refraining from the arrogant pronouncements of the philosophers as well as from the wanton wiles of the poets, he everywhere reprimands and censures, with very honest and at the same time very entertaining wit, our human frailties.)[36]

The Horatian ideal of miscere utile dulci was quoted by Renaissance critics in defence of all imaginative writing, not just satire; but satirists and their apologists, who had more to defend, never tired of trumpeting it. The ancient satirists and moralists in particular answered the humanist and Christian justification of pagan literature on the grounds of its salutary effect on moral conduct. Introducing his translation of Lucian's Cynicus, More notes the resemblance between Cynic and Christian morals and St. John Chrysostom's inclusion of this dialogue in his homily on the gospel of St. John. More was well aware of Lucian's reputation as a scoffer at all things holy, and his prefaces are intended to disarm criticism of him on that score. Regarding Philopseudes ("The Lover of Lies"), the longest of his translations, More notices that "the author seems to

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36. More, Complete Works, 3-1, ed. C.R. Thompson, p.2. The translation is Thompson's, p.3.

have been disposed to doubt his own immortality," but asks, "what difference does it make to me what a pagan thinks about those articles contained in the principal mysteries of the Christian faith?"[37]

> Hunc certe fructum nobis afferet iste dialogus, ut neque magicis habeamus praestigijs fidem, & superstitione careamus, quae passim sub specie religionis obrepit.
>
> (Surely the dialogue will teach us this lesson: that we should put no trust in magic and that we should eschew superstition, which obtrudes everywhere under the guise of religion.)[38]

More then applies the lesson at some length in an attack on patently fictitious lives of saints and virgins with obvious reference to contemporary practice. More's Utopians might be above all taken with Lucian's jests, for living in a well-regulated commonwealth, they did not require his satire.[39] The source of Lucian's attractiveness to More himself, however, is indicated in the forceful words against pious fraud that conclude his comments on Philopseudes.

Erasmus' dedications parallel More's. In the same epistle to Urswick quoted above, he writes:

> Omne tulit punctum (vt scripsit Flaccus) qui miscuit utile dulci. Quod quidem aut nemo, mea sententia, aut noster hic Lucianus est assequutus, qui priscae comoediae dicacitatem, sed citra petulantium, referens, Deum immortalem, qua vafricie, quo lepore perstringit omnia, quo naso cuncta suspendit, quam omnia miro sale perfricat.

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37. ibid., p.5.

38. ibid., pp. 4-5.

39. More, Utopia, in Complete Works, New Haven, vol. 4, ed. E. Surtz and J.H. Hexter, 1965, p.182: "Luciani quoque facetijs ac lepore capiuntur".

> (He wins all the votes (as Horace wrote) who mixes the useful with the pleasing. Which precept, in my opinion, either no one has followed or else this our Lucian, who brought back the pungent satire of early comedy without its wantonness. Immortal God, with what artfulness, with what comeliness he reproaches, with what shrewdness he judges all things, how he rubs over everything with wonderful wit.)[40]

Erasmus points out in other dedications that Lucian has lost none of his utility with age. On the contrary, it is the application of Lucian's satire to contemporary social and religious issues that underlies Erasmus' interest in these "nugae". In the preface to Convivium, Erasmus notes Lucian's ridicule of the philosophers of his own times and adds:

> At mihi videtur iustius esse stomachandum in huius saeculi mores, quo videmus philosophorum ac theologorum scholas multo puerilius etiam inter se dissidere nec minus atrociter digladiari; tum inter religionis professores nihilominus cruentam esse pugnam quam in eo convivio Lucianus vel finxit vel retulit.
>
> (But the manners of this age seem to me more worthy to be scorned, when we see the schools of philosophers and theologians fall out even more childishly and take up swords no less fiercely, and a battle no less bloody among those who profess religion than Lucian either made up or related of that banquet.)[41]

The contentious philosophers Erasmus has in mind are of course the scholastic theologians, of whom he had had first-hand experience at Paris, and whose writings, he said, only served to make men quarrelsome. The preface to Pseudomantes ("The False Prophet") comments on superstition with reference to the same abuses described by More.[42] Just as More had made an explicitly Christian application of Cynicus, so

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40. Erasmi Opera Omnia, Amsterdam, 1969, I-1, pp. 470-71; my trans.

41. ibid., p. 603; my trans.

42. ibid., p. 449.

Erasmus observes in his dedication to Toxaris sive Amicitia that Christianity is nothing else but the friendship Lucian depicts perfected in the love of Christ.[43]

In translating Lucian, Erasmus and More apprenticed themselves to Menippean satire. The combination of the useful with the pleasing; of truth with laughter; of serious matters with frivolous ones; of topical satire with learned wit: all these hybrids ring changes on the single idea of spoudogeloion. They are the marks Erasmus and More noted in Lucian and which they aimed at in their own Lucianic works. To be sure, Horace and Plato also provided instruction in the seriocomic, and only men whose temperaments naturally inclined them to satire and irony would have been able to learn its literary devices in the first place. To judge from their later works, however, it was in Lucian that Erasmus and More found their satirical model.

To mix the useful with the pleasing: let us dwell a moment on this hackneyed phrase. Every improvement, moral or practical, and solace to human life is comprehended in "the useful", from the government of the passions and the regulation of sheep farming to the consolation of philosophy; all the powers of wit and every variety of literary pleasure must be educed from that anemic term "the pleasing". The title page of Utopia announces a book "vere aureus, nec minus salutaris quam festiuus", and the liminary poems and letters, by Budé and other friends of More, resound the

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43. ibid., pp. 443-444.

thought. The importance of the idea for humanist satire would be difficult to overestimate. Miscere utile dulci: the words are indissolubly wedded in this dative construction. It is the erring writer of Swift's Tale of a Tub who proposes to make books by combining "a Layer of Utile and a Layer of Dulce".[44] Lucianists mingle them to the point that the pleasure their works give is sometimes presented as an end useful in itself. Rabelais, for example, speaks of the "alaigresse et consolation nouvelle" that "plusieurs gens languoureux, malades, ou autrement faschez et desolez" have received by reading his "folastries joyeux".[45]

"Sic ridens vera dicit, vera dicendo ridet": thus Erasmus of Lucian. Erasmus' complication of the Horatian tag (ridendo dicere verum) may be no more than a rhetorical flourish, or it may point to the interpenetration of truth and laughter in Lucianic writing. On one level satire uses laughter simply to take the sting out of an unwelcome truth. On another, particularly in the menippea, laughter is a quasi-philosophic theme in its own right. The real truth about human affairs characteristically entails laughter (gay as well as satirical) such as Menippus' from the moon or Folly's from her rostrum. In risu veritas, as Joyce rephrases Horace.

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44. Swift, A Tale of a Tub, ed. Guthkelch and Smith, Oxford, 1958, p. 124.

45. Rabelais, Le Quart Livre, ed. R. Marichal, Geneva, 1947, p. 3 and p. 7.

Erasmus writes to More: "nihil festiuius quam ita tractare nugas vt nihil minus quam nugatus fuisse videaris" ('nothing is more entertaining than treating trivialities in such a way as to make it clear you are doing anything but trifle with them').[46] Rabelais states in the Prologue to Gargantua: "Les matieres icy traictées ne sont tant folastres comme le tiltre au dessus pretendoit".[47] To discuss serious matters in a bantering tone or in comic settings, this was the practice of the humanist imitators of Lucian.[48] Jest and earnest cannot always be sharply distinguished, however, in Lucian or in his followers: sic seria nugis, nugas seriis miscet. Nor are they necessarily mutually exclusive categories. Although seriousness seeks to exclude play, play, as Huizinga argues, may well include seriousness.[49] When in a letter of 1515 Erasmus wrote to the Louvain theologian Martin Dorp that in the Praise of Folly he had only expressed sub specie lusus

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46. EE, I, no. 222, ll. 51-52 (p. 461); translation from the Praise of Folly, ed. cit., p. 59.

47. Rabelais, Gargantua, ed. M.A. Screech, Geneva, 1970, p.12.

48. Edgar Wind, Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance, London, 1958, pp. 236-37, notes that Renaissance Platonists, among them Cusanus, Ficino, Pico, Calcagnini, and Bocchi, adopted the Socratic maxim of serio ludere as a guide to "the Orphic disguise: the art of interweaving the divine secrets with the fabric of fables". Rabelais may well parody this formula (at the same time as he makes use of it) in the Prologue to Gargantua, just as he parodies Ficino's universe tied together by love in Panurge's praise of debts and debtors in the Tiers Livre. Erasmus compares Folly's devotees to mystical initiates at the close of the Praise of Folly.

49. Johan Huizinga, Homo Ludens, London, 1971, p. 65.

the ideals of Christian conduct he had previously set forth in the Enchiridion Militis Christiani (written 1501),[50] he was telling only half the truth. The lusus of the Praise of Folly is not merely a cover, but the source of the book's irony and ultimately of its meaning.

Another lesson to be learned from Lucian (though not, of course, exclusively from him) was the practice of learned wit: sic titillat allusionibus. Lucian used the literary language of Attic Greek, the idiom of fifth century Athens. He could claim with some justice that A True Story was almost a cento from the Greek classics. So too the humanists, also writing in a recovered classical tongue, cultivated the art of allusion and quotation, none more deftly than Erasmus in the Praise of Folly. The Greek names in Utopia (including of course the title) are coinages in Lucian's manner. The humanists allowed learned recreation as an end in itself, but the Lucianists among them combined it with satiric realism. The objects of their satire are remarkably like Lucian's own. The sophistication of technical philosophy and a widespread superstitiousness characterized both the second century and the waning middle ages. "The abuses in learning and religion" were the reformers' themes, as they had been Lucian's and were to become Swift's.

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50. EE II, no. 337, ll. 91-92 (p.93).

So striking are the similarities between Lucian's situation and Erasmus' and More's, that the differences are worth recalling. Lucian's attachment to Philosophy and Truth is not of the same order ~~of~~ as Erasmus' and More's to Christianity. Though Lucian exposes, he does not reform. Erasmus' and More's Lucianic works have a visionary reach and a practical application to human affairs that Lucian's lack, however imaginative or morally useful they may be. What Erasmus and More learned from Lucian, however, was not how to be serious, but how to combine seriousness with jest and satire. This they taught to other reformers, who were also reading Lucian for themselves, often in Erasmus' and More's translations.

The volume of their translations, first published in 1506 and augmented by Erasmus in 1514 and 1517, was reprinted in various editions more than twenty times before being incorporated into Jacob Micyllus' first complete Latin Lucian of 1538.[51] No other translations enjoyed such success. In the meantime, familiarity with Lucian was also promoted by increasing contact with the Greek text and by other renderings into Latin and the vernaculars.

Translation and imitation particularly flourished in Germany. Among the contributors to Micyllus' volume were Melancthon and Pirckheimer. Pirckheimer also composed a witty praise of gout (1523) modelled on Lucian's burlesque

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51. v. C.R. Thompson, "Lucian and Lucianism", bibliography.

tragedy Tragodopodagra (now considered spurious) and Erasmus' Moria. He is also the probable author of Eckius Dedolatus (1519), a satirical dialogue directed against Johann Eck, Luther's opponent in the Leipzig disputations of that year.[52] The volatile Ulrich von Hutten wrote a series of anti-Roman dialogues in Latin (1517-20) just prior to joining Luther's Reformation.[53] Johannes Froben of Basle, the publisher of Erasmus' works and of More's Utopia, hailed Hutten as "Lucianus renatus" in a letter to More of 1518.[54] Hutten translated his own dialogues into German soon after their publication in Latin, collecting four of them into the Gesprächsuchlein of 1521. They were extensively imitated during the next few years of religious dissension in Germany.[55]

France too produced Lucianists, in Marot, Des Periers,[56] and Rabelais.[57] All three wrote in French. Burton calls Rabelais "that French Lucian" (I, 229), a title by which he

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52. v. the edition of Thomas W. Best, Lexington, Kentucky, 1971.

53. v. Olga Gewerstock, Lucian und Hutten. Zur Geschicte des Dialogs im 16. Jahrhundert, Berlin, 1924, and Hajo Holborn, Ulrich von Hutten and the German Reformation, trans. R.H. Bainton, New York, 1965, chap.8.

54. The Correspondence of Sir Thomas More, ed. E.F. Rogers, Princeton, 1947, epist. 67, pp. 132-33.

55. v. Gewerstock, op.cit., and G. Niemann, Die Dialogliteratur der Reformationzeit nach ihrer Entstehund und Entwicklung, Leipzig, 1905.

56. v. C.A. Mayer, "The Lucianism of Des Périers", Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance XII (1950), 190-207.

57. v. Jean Plattard, l'Oeuvre de Rabelais, Paris, 1910, pp. 204-214.

was also known to contemporaries.[58] England's contribution to early Renaissance Lucianism was entirely that of More and his house guest.

Of all the Lucianic productions of the first half of the sixteenth century, none was more popular than the Latin Colloquies (1518-32) of the peripatetic Erasmus.[59] To call this collection of dramatic dialogues Lucianic or Menippean is not to say that they are not also thoroughly Erasmian. They explore Erasmus' philosophia Christi on the level of the common lives of contemporary Europeans. Many of the characters that appear in them are modelled on men and women of Erasmus' acquaintance. Their conversations take up the burning issues of the day or are set in the context of them. The very range of setting and subject is comparable to that of Varro's Menippeans, not because Erasmus was imitating them or Lucian's dialogues, but because Menippean satire fills itself out from an intrinsic tendency to include all experience and to test ideas in all situations. Socrates brought philosophy down from the heavens to earth, Erasmus said, "ego philosophiam etiam in lusus, confabulationes, et compotationes deduxi" ('and I have brought it even into games, informal conversations, and drinking parties').[60] The Colloquies may be seen as an anatomy of

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58. ibid., p. 205.

59. v. Martha Heep, Die Colloquia Familiaria des Erasmus und Lucian, Halle, 1927.

60. Erasmi Opera Omnia, Amsterdam, vol. II, ed. L.E. Halkin, F. Bierlaire, and R. Hoven, 1972, De Utilitate Colloquiorum, p. 746, ll. 179-181.

Europe in the 1520's performed from the vantage point of the philosophia Christi. Erasmus fully exploits the journalistic and satirical side of the Menippean genre at the same time as he expresses its utopian aspirations. The behaviour book (such was Erasmus' conception of the Colloquies)[61] presents utopia not in the form of an ideal state but as a manual of education.[62]

The vogue for Lucian and Lucianic writing was not universal. Not every man of learning and position was what Erasmus had called More in the preface to the Praise of Folly, an omnium horarum homo, i.e. one "qui seriis pariter ac iocis esset accomodatus et quum assidue libeat convivere".[63] Lucianic irreverence and irony excited the incomprehension and rebuke of conservatives. The difficulty the Praise of Folly caused some of its readers was not merely a matter of its allusiveness, or even its satire, but its laughing treatment of serious subjects. No precedents or apologies could move those whom Rabelais called "agelastes", ie. "poinct ne rians, tristes, fascheux",[64] to accept seriocomic writing. There is surely a certain naiveté, or else a deliberate polemical gambit, in the surprise expressed by Erasmus and

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61. In 1522 Erasmus signalled the change that had taken place in the character of the Colloquies by adding the words "non tantum ad linguam puerilem expoliendam utiles verum etiam ad vitam instituendam" to the title.

62. v. Northrop Frye, The Stubborn Structure, London, 1970.

63. Erasmus, Adagia, I, 3, 86.

64. Rabelais, Le Quart Livre, p.7. and p. 271.

Rabelais at the unwelcome reception of their works in some quarters. Beneath their witty raillery and enlightened criticism, the threat to the established order is easily perceived. When Martin Dorp asked Erasmus to write a praise of wisdom to atone for his Praise of Folly,[65] he may not have understood Erasmus' irony; or he may have understood it perfectly and seen its consequences.

Erasmus earned the reputation of a scoffer at religion from his enemies partly through the contagion of Lucian. Lucian had denied the immortality of the soul and had mocked not only the pagan gods but, in the Death of Peregrinus, the Christian sect. In addition, the spurious Philopatris was believed to contain blasphemies against the Trinity. More and Erasmus might make excuses for Lucian, as for other pagan moralists, but those inimical to reform were not always willing to grant them. Nor were the Lucianists immune to attack by the reformers themselves. Luther had no use for festivitas. The greatest taunt that he could hurl against Erasmus (he promised to do so from his death bed) was to call him a Lucianist.[66] More suffered similar abuse from a fellow prisoner in the Tower.[67] Calvin called Rabelais a "singe de Lucien."

Lucian himself enjoyed better fortunes than some of

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65. EE II, no. 304, ll. 74-75 (p.15).

66. D. Martin Luthers Werke, Weimar, 1883- , Tischreden, III, 136-137, cited by C.R. Thompson, The Translations of Lucian, p.45.

67. C.R. Thompson, introduction to More, Complete Works, 3-1, xxiv.

his champions. He became a school author in Germany, England, and the Netherlands. Among Greek authors, he has been reckoned behind only Plato and Plutarch in popularity in the first half of the sixteenth century. He continued to supply those at the forefront of religious controversy with plots and characters throughout the century and to stimulate satirists to the time of Voltaire, whose Micromégas (1752) is a deliberate and successful attempt to capture Lucian's manner.

Some Extra-literary Considerations

The recovery of Lucian and of the other Menippean authors of antiquity does not in itself fully account for the revival of Menippean satire in the Renaissance. Although imitation of classical authors was practiced by humanists as an end in itself, imitations of the Lucianic or Senecan mode inevitably drew their life-blood from the conditions of fifteenth and sixteenth-century culture. The recovery of the classical menippea is in fact impossible to distinguish from the Renaissance renewal of the genre. The sources of renewal lay not in the texts of Lucian and Seneca and Varro themselves, but in the literary and philosophical (if not also social and economic) world into which they were reintroduced (and which had indeed brought about their recovery). Even as Menippean satire was renewed from without, however, it continued to shape from within. New experience was assimilated and expressed by the enduring language of genre.

Two movements, one for the reform of education, initiated by Petrarch, the other for the reform of the Church, culminating in the Lutheran Reformation, subsume many of the ideological currents of the early European Renaissance. Both are in essence polemical: humanism combats the Gothic age of medieval learning from the point of view of an idealized antiquity, and the Reformation and its precursors attempt spiritually to regenerate the decaying edifice of the medieval Church. The immediate setting of Lucianic satire is provided by these two movements. The battles of the Lucianists were fought in both campaigns, which merged to some degree in the early sixteenth century. The call for satire may be understood in this context, but, at the same time, the revival of a literary genre of which only one aspect is topical criticism must be viewed with reference to more than its particular satirical targets.

Among the less concrete but nonetheless important aspects of the milieu in which Renaissance Menippean satire developed were the following: the cultivation of classical rhetoric in place of medieval logic; the shift from the abstractions of scholasticism toward the ethical orientation of classical philosophy, based on the ideal of self-knowledge; the establishment of experience as a moral and epistemological value; and a pervasive awareness of the limits of human reason, flowering in the rediscovery of ancient scepticism and in religious transrationalism. Although these features of Renaissance philosophy (if such a generalization may be allowed) are neither derived from the classical menippea nor determine in themselves the re-emergence of the genre in the

Renaissance, in some sense they make the writing of Menippean satire possible, and find memorable expression (though not of course their sole expression) in Menippean works.

Even the invention of the printing press may be supposed to have abetted the revival of the genre: it not only released a flood of knowledge and opinion, the "abysme de science" which is the natural element of the menippea, but it permitted the wide distribution of topical comment. Erasmus' career, to say nothing of Burton's Anatomy, is is unthinkable without the printing press.

To measure the impact of the geographical and astronomical discoveries of the Renaissance upon literary genre would be a speculative venture indeed, but one or two points can be quickly made. Since antiquity menippean authors had been sending their heroes on marvellous journeys and celestial voyages for the purposes of satirical fantasy. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, improvements in the art of navigation and the science of astronomy suddenly gave these plots the volume of experience.[68] The idea of a plurality of worlds, for example, and of criticising the values of civilization by comparing them to those of barbarian nations had been taken up by Menippean satire in antiquity; the discoveries of the Renaissance wrought themselves spontaneously into Menippean

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68. Although no moon voyages were taken, the subject was of legitimate scientific interest. v. Marjorie Hope Nicolson, Voyages to the Moon, New York, 1948.

themes and were appropriated for purposes of satire by numerous writers, More, Rabelais, and Burton included.

Lastly among conditions favourable to the re-emergence of Menippean satire, the idea of renaissance itself and the feeling among humanists of replacing the effete order of the Middle Ages by the new in all fields of learning is closely related to Renaissance utopianism,[69] and thereby to the menippea, in which utopian themes often play a part.

Paradox

One form of the Renaissance menippea in which the genre is renewed and which reflects the wider intellectual and literary climate of the period is the literature of rhetorical paradox. Although recent studies have made this literature familiar, the place of paradox in the development of satire is not always recognized.[70] What

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69. Gargantua's well-known letter to Pantagruel, in which he celebrates the revival of learning, is written "De Utopie". Rabelais, Pantagruel, ed. V.L. Saulnier, Geneva, 1965, pp. 41-46.

70. W.G. Rice, "The Paradossi of Ortensio Lando", Michigan Studies in English and Comparative Literature VIII (1932), 59-74; V.L. Saulnier, "Proverbe et paradoxe du Ve et XVIe siècles", in Pensée humaniste et tradition chrétienne aux XVe et XVIe siècles, ed. H. Bédarida, Paris, 1950, 87-104; A.E. Malloch, "The Technique and Function of the Renaissance Paradox", Studies in Philology 53 (1956), 191-203; H.K. Miller, "The Paradoxical Encomium with Special Reference to its Vogue in England, 1600-1800", Modern Philology 53 (1956), 145-178; Sister M. Geraldine, C.S.J., "Erasmus and the Tradition of Paradox", Studies in Philology 61 (1963), 41-63; Walter Kaiser, Praisers of Folly, London, 1964; Rosalie Colie, Paradoxia Epidemica, Princeton, 1966; and on paradox and satire, Emrys Jones, "Pope and Dulness", Proceedings of the British Academy 54 (1968) 231-263. On the paradoxical encomium in antiquity, v. A.S. Pease, "Things Without Honor", Classical Philology 21(1926), 27-42.

had been in antiquity primarily an epideictic genre became in the Renaissance (in addition to its revived popularity as a display piece) a vehicle for Menippean satire. The Praise of Folly, Utopia (of which Book II, composed first, is Hythlodaeus' praise of Nowhereland), and Agrippa's De Vanitate are Menippean paradoxes. Rabelais' books contain some of the best known examples of paradox. Among English writers, Thomas Nashe, Donne, and William Cornwallis wrote paradoxes of the conventional kind, while Harington, Burton, and later Rochester, Swift, and Pope put the paradox to use in satire. Both in the form of an encomium of "things without honour" and in the defence of opinions contrary to the common ones, a minor rhetorical genre became a major seriocomic one.

In antiquity, the paradox was developed as an exercise in rhetoric, chiefly in the form of a speech in praise of persons or objects commonly held unworthy of praise. An orator might show his skill by inventing arguments in praise of Thersites or of Helen, of baldness, mice, pebbles, smoke, and so forth. The paradoxical encomium was an established literary type as early as the fifth century B.C. It flourished at the hands of the sophists, who claimed to be able to defend either side of a question. The Second Sophistic of the Roman era produced a rich literature of paradox, including Lucian's encomium of the housefly and the social parasite and his mock-tragedy in defence of gout. There are scattered medieval examples of the paradoxical

encomium and several early Renaissance Italian ones, but it was in the sixteenth century that the form attained an astonishing popularity, which did not abate until the mid-eighteenth.

The paradoxical encomium had a less formal relative in moral philosophy. Paradoxes, i.e. propositions "quae... sunt admirabilia contraque opinionem omnium", as Cicero glosses the Greek term,[71] had been elaborated by philosophers since the time of Socrates. The Stoics were their chief propounders. Their paradoxes were employed, sometimes at ironic distance, by the Greek and Roman diatribists and by Varro and Lucian.[72] Cicero's Paradoxa Stoicorum defends six of the more Socratic Stoic paradoxes with studied impromptu and a deliberate use of the techniques of the diatribe. The Renaissance vernacular 'defence of contraries' is much closer to Cicero's form than to the methodized encomia favoured by Latin writers.

As in the classical period, the paradox offered Renaissance humanists and courtiers the opportunity to show off their learning and ingenuity. Paradox might have purposes beyond display, however, and defences for the form other than honourable precedent were sometimes offered. We have already noticed Erasmus' rationale for treating trifles in what became the most influential paradoxical

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71. M. Tulli Ciceronis Paradoxa Stoicorum, ed. A. Lee, London, 1953, p.4.

72. v. David Sigsbee, "The Paradoxa Stoicorum in Varro's Menippeans", Classical Philology 71 (1976), 244-248.

encomium of the Renaissance, the Praise of Folly. That work is atypical, however, in several respects, not the least of which is that Folly sings her own praises. Two other defences of paradox present simpler arguments. In the introduction to his translation (1553) of Ortensio Lando's Paradossi (1543, the book that set the fashion for the vernacular paradox), Charles Estienne offers his readers:

> en ce liuret le debat d'aucuns propos, que les anciens ont uoulu nommer Paradoxes: C'est a dire, contraires a l'opinion de la pluspart des hommes: affin que par le discours d'iceux, la uerité opposite t'en soit a l'advenir plus clere & apparente: & aussi pour t'exerciter au debat des choses qui te contraignent à chercher diligemment & laborieusement raisons, preuues, authoritez, histoires & memoires fort diverses & cachees. En quoi toutesfois ie ne uoudrois que tu fusses tant offensé, que pour mon dire ou conclusion, tu en croye autre chose que le commun.[73]

Donne expresses much the same idea in a letter to a friend (ca. 1600) sent to accompany his Paradoxes in manuscript. He explains:

> if they make you to find better reasons against them they do there office: for they are but swaggerers: quiet enough if you resist them. if perchaunce they be pretyly guilt, that is there best for they are not hatcht: they are rather alarums to truth to arme her then enemies.[74]

Estienne and Donne pretend to administer a catechism in negative form: after resisting a series of edifying challenges, the reader will have confirmed himself in the

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73. Charles Estienne, Paradoxes, Poitiers, 1553, p.1.

74. The letter is printed by Evelyn Simpson, A Study of the Prose Works of John Donne, Oxford, 1948, pp. 316-317.

common opinion. Estienne's and Donne's paradoxes do indeed force the reader to think for himself and to examine the nature of his received ideas; they are "alarms to truth", as Donne says. But their true nature is not always revealed when they are overturned.[75] On the contrary, the arguments in their favour may well carry conviction. It is precisely the difficulty of drawing the line between jest and seriousness that gives the paradox its intellectual vitality. Estienne's and Donne's remarks need not be taken entirely at face value; in any case, they are belied by the experience of reading their paradoxes.

A paradox immediately provokes a search for clues as to how it should be taken, with or without irony. The declination of a paradoxist's words toward jest can usually be measured by a reader non omnino naris obesae and aware of the conventions of seriocomic writing. The pointed wit of Donne's paradoxes and the elaborate fictional apparatuses of the Praise of Folly and Utopia permit a refinement of authorial intention and serve as a guide to interpretation. Thus Erasmus can approve of some kinds of folly in earnest and ridicule other kinds in a single speech in praise of folly. So Donne can defend the satirist's laughter and turn it upon idly jesting courtiers in his paradox "That a wise man is known by much laughing". So Agrippa can distinguish between the use and abuse of

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75. A.E. Malloch, op.cit., p.203, thinks otherwise.

knowledge in De Vanitate, and More can hint at what is absurd and what commendable in the customs of Utopia. Yet detection of authorial intention unriddles these works only up to a point (the point at which interpretation of them sometimes breaks down). Often paradox begs the question of intention. We observe Erasmus manipulating a puppet, until the puppet includes Erasmus among the number of her followers. When a discourse is put into the mouth of a narrator like Stultitia or Hythlodaeus ('the babbler of nonsense'), it is set free from strict codes of intention, uniform seriousness, and univocal meaning.[76] The device of the unreliable narrator, however, only objectifies the ambivalence that is always potential in rhetorical paradox.

The germ of ambivalence is present in the very situation of paradox, whether it is nurtured by fictional devices or not. Essentially, paradox is no more than the opposition of one opinion or standard to another. It challenges the accepted truths by raising the possibility of another way of looking at them. Its proper force is not that of affirmation or negation but of experiment, of the testing of received ideas. It is not surprising that paradoxes lie at the origin of many of Montaigne's Essais.[77]

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76. Lucian's True Story may have provided the immediate source of this device, but Socrates is its originator. On its use in modern fiction, v. Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction, Chicago, 1971, pp. 227ff.

77. Margaret McGowan, Montaigne's Deceits, London, 1974, chap.4.

The titles of Cornwallis' two posthumous volumes, Essayes of Certain Paradoxes and Essayes or rather, Encomiums point to the connection between paradox and the notion of trial. Although the application of a paradox is always relative to the opinions held by particular readers, who may find in it a single meaning, paradox in itself is open-ended and Janus-faced. An encomium of poverty that may amuse a rich man when his fortunes are at their height may serve to console him when the market has crashed. Even the declared intentions of an author cannot wholly suppress the doubleness inherent in paradox. For example, it is clear that Pope means to ridicule dulness in the Dunciad, but his celebration of its powers is not always a convincing display of one-sided mockery.

The problematic nature of rhetorical paradox does not lie in rhetoric alone. The subjects of paradox tend themselves to be two-sided. Either some doubleness in the nature of things or in our approach to them provides the raw material for the paradoxist. Though folly, nothingness, dulness, ignorance, melancholy, and madness are conventionally things without honour, they are (or may be shown to be) "fundamental principles of being"[78] which underlie, and what is more, generate human experience. As Rochester describes it (playing on the theological idea of creatio ex

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78. The phrase and the idea are taken from Emrys Jones, "Pope and Dulness", p. 237.

nihilo in "Upon Nothing"), Nothing lies at the origin of all Somethings, including the cosmos itself:

> Ere Time and Place were, Time and Place were not,
> When primitive Nothing Something straight begot;
> Then all proceeded from the great united What.[79]

In Erasmus' treatment, Folly is the goddess who sustains life in pleasant illusions as well as the nurse of superstition and vain glory. Ignorance, the "maitresse forme" of Montaigne, is the foundation of sagesse as well as the failure of science. Though Pope's Mighty Mother does not openly acknowledge him her son, she does not confine her blessings to dunces alone; insofar as the unconscious and the low are in part the source and inspiration of a writer's creative powers (as Pope suggests, at least subliminally, throughout the Dunciad), Dulness has her seat in Pope's as well as in Cibber's brain. Swift's "Digression on Madness" in A Tale of a Tub demonstrates that the symptoms of dementia in the mad are versions of the talents of the civic leaders who have sequestered them in Bedlam. For Burton, man's universal malady is the great motive for his industry; the causes and cures of melancholy, mortality and vitality, are born ab eodem ovo. All these writers defend the worthiness of things commonly held in contempt or demonstrate the universality of conditions commonly confined to the few in such a way as to exploit the ambivalence inherent in their subjects.

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79. The Complete Poems of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, ed. D.M. Vieth, New Haven, 1968, p.118, ll.4-6.

When Donne wrote that "New philosophy calls all in doubt", he was thinking primarily of the new theories in astronomy, but his words resonate other challenges to fixed belief that the Renaissance sustained. Paradox, with its ironic inconclusiveness and sport with opposites was a form that could accommodate relativity and scepticism. Behind the free play of literary recreation, however, there usually lies a firm belief in a transcendent value. The greatest exposition of Renaissance scepticism, Montaigne's "Apologie de Raymond Sebond", concludes with an avowal of faith in an eternal, unchanging God. The Praise of Folly culminates in a fervent praise of Pauline folly, seen as the rapture of a furor divinus. Agrippa's De Vanitate ends with an unironical encomium of the mystery-bearing ass, a symbol of Christ. These absolutes not only permit the experimentalism of paradox, but in some sense beget it.

To resume: just as the menippea embraced various genres such as the symposium and the diatribe in antiquity, so it added the paradox to its repertoire in the Renaissance. The Socratic examination of received ideas, the critique of abstract knowledge, the inversions of hierarchy, the play with language and learning, the philosophic universalism and thematic ambivalence that are perennial characteristics of Menippean satire found a ready vessel in the rhetorical paradox. The literature of paradox captured a strain of Renaissance experience and shaped it, fittingly enough, into a pattern provided by a recovered classical genre.

The Underwood of Satire

The satirical impulse does not always rise to the height of philosophical irony or moral contemplation. Those productions that Dryden consigned to "the underwood of Satire",[80] principally lampoons of particular persons, such as the iambics of Archilochus against Lycambes, perhaps make up the bulk of satiric writing in any age. Nor are the loftier "timber-trees" always generically distinguishable from them. Seneca's Apocolocyntosis and Dryden's own MacFlecknoe are attacks ad hominem as much as they are satires "of general extension" on tyranny and dulness, respectively. The religious and political crisis of Renaissance Europe produced not only works like Utopia but a great deal of personal and factional satire as well. In many cases this satire made use of Menippean plots, principally on the models of Seneca and Lucian.

The satirical underwood of the sixteenth century is overwhelmingly anti-Roman. Anti-papal and anti-clerical satire found a voice in Rome itself in the person, or rather in the statue of Pasquil.[81] The printer of John Donne's Ignatius His Conclave (1611) claims in an address to the reader (probably by Donne himself) that:

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80. Dryden, Essays, ed. Ker, vol. II, p. 52.

81. For a brief history of Pasquil, v. the Encyclopedia Britannica, Eleventh Edition, Cambridge, 1922, vol. XX, p. 885.

> the things delivered in this booke, were many degrees more modest, then those which themselves, in their owne civill warres, do daily vomit forth, when they butcher and mangle the fame and reputation of their Popes & Cardinals by their revived Lucian, Pasquil.[82]

A statue missing nose, arms, and part of a leg, believed to represent Hercules, was exhumed in Rome in 1501 and placed in the Piazza Navona. During the festival of St. Mark, satirical verses sharply critical of the Church and the Pope were permitted to be affixed to it, and it was named Pasquillo or Pasquino after a sharp-tongued schoolmaster who had lived near the site of its discovery. These verses, mostly short epigrams, were composed as if spoken by Pasquil himself or by the various Roman gods whom he was annually dressed to resemble. In 1509 Pasquil was given a partner when another statue, dubbed Marforio from the place of its discovery in the Campus Martius, was placed beside him. Marforio sometimes engaged Pasquil in dialogue in the Lucianic manner. Numerous Pasquils, as these squibs came to be called, have been preserved in several collections of Latin verses[83] and in the anthology of the Italian Protestant exile Caelius Secundus Curio, which also contains dialogues.[84] Some of Curio's Pasquils were probably never

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82. Donne, Ignatius His Conclave, ed. T.S. Healy, Oxford, 1967, p.5.

83. v. the British Museum General Catalogue of Printed Books under "Pasquino" for anthologies of 1509, 1513, 1515, 1518, 1526, 1536.

84. Pasquillorum Tomi Duo, Basel, 1544.

fixed to the statue.[85] He claims Erasmus' anonymous Julius Exclusus for Pasquil as well as dialogues in which von Hutten is a speaker. Curio's own Pasquillus Ecstaticus, a dream journey to Purgatory, seat of Cardinals and Popes, concludes his two-volume collection. A later version of Pasquillus Ecstaticus contains a trip to the moon.[86] Donne probably knew Curio's satire; he appears to refer to it in "Satyre IV",[87] and in the Lucianic Ignatius he is transported to Hell "in an Extasie".[88] It may have been Pasquil that prompted Erasmus to try his own hand at satire after his visit to Rome in 1509.[89] He composed the Praise of Folly (as he tells us) riding on horseback over the Alps from Rome on his way to More's house in London. Pasquil was still serving as a mouthpiece for anti-Papal satire in Donne's time and had meanwhile been naturalized in English by Sir

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85. At least one pasquil in Curio's collection, the Geldevangelium ('Gospel of Money'), an anti-Papal Biblical parody, dates from as early as the thirteenth century (v. Lehmann, Die Parodie im Mittelalter, p.33).

86. Geneva, 1544. This version was Englished, from an intermediate Italian translation, by William Phiston as Pasquin in a Traunce, London, 1556. v. Korkowski, "Donne's Ignatius", p. 423.

87. Donne, "Satyre IV", ll. 157-58, cited by Healy, op.cit.

88. Donne, Ignatius His Conclave; p.5. v. Korkowski, p. 434.

89. Erasmus' letters from Rome have not been preserved. Relevant conjectures about the effect of Pasquil on Erasmus may be found in Preserved Smith, Erasmus, London, 1923, pp. 118-19.

Thomas Elyot, Thomas Nashe, and Nicholas Breton.[90] In the opening paragraph of Burton's Anatomy, Democritus Jr. seeks to reassure the reader "expecting a pasquil, a satire" that his name betokens no such thing.

Another vehicle for satire directed at particular persons or groups was the Menippean Satire itself, so called by its practitioners. Lipsius' Satyra Menippea Somnium and the Satyre Menippée not only recalled Seneca and Lucian in their plots but established an awareness of the genre within which these and other Menippeans had written. As Korkowski remarks, the rash of Menippean satires that followed upon these two works in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries bears the character of a neo-classical revival.[91] These satires, by such hands as Joseph Justus Scaliger, Daniel Heinsius, Caspar Barth, Peter Cunaeus, and Donne on the Protestant side, and by Guillaume de Reboul, Erycius Puteanus, and the redoutable Caspar Schoppe on the Catholic, in fact continue the polemical activity of the Lucianists and Pasquillers of the earlier sixteenth century, but cultivate the Menippean Satire with

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90. v. A. Kernan, The Cankered Muse, pp. 51-54. Pasquil came to represent the anti-Puritan stance during the Marprelate controversy.

91. Korkowski, p. 436.

scholarly zeal.[92]

In establishing a model of Menippean plot and decorum, Seneca's example was as important as Lucian's. The Apocolocyntosis, or Ludus in mortem Claudii Caesarii as it

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92. In chronological order of first publication, these are the satires in question:

Justus Lipsius, Satyra Menippea Somnium, lusus in nostri aevi criticos, 1581.
Le Roy, Passerat, Pithou, Chrestien, Rapin, Gillot, La Satyre Menippée, 1593, and Le Supplement de la Satyre Menippée de la Vertu du Catholicon, ou Nouvelles des Régions de la Lune, 1594, with the "Discours de l'Imprimeur", 1595. Englished as A Pleasant Satyre or Poesie, a Satyre Menippized 1595, and again as Englandes Bright Honour: Shining through the darke disgrace of Spaines Catholicon, 1602.
Guillaume de Reboul, La Cabale des Reformez tiree nouvellement du puits de Democrite, 1597.
Les Salmonees du Sieur de Reboul, 1597.
Apologie de Reboul sur la Cabale des Reformez, 1597.
Les Actes du Synode Universel, 1601.
John Barclay, Euphormionis Lusini Satyricon, 1603 (?), 1605.
Caspar Schoppe, Scaliger Hypobolimaeus, 1607.
Joseph Justus Scaliger, Confutatio Fabulae Burdonum, 1608.
Daniel Heinsius, Munsterus Hypobolimaeus, sive Hercules tuam Fidem, id est, Satyra Menippea, de vita, origine, et moribus Gasparis Schopii, 1608.
Virgula Divina, sive Apotheosis Lucretii Vespillonis, 1608.
Erycius Puteanus, Comus sive Phagesiposia Cimmeria, Somnium, 1608.
Caspar Schoppe, Oporini Grubini Amphotides Scioppianae, 1611.
John Donne, Conclave Ignatii, 1611, Englished by Donne as Ignatius His Conclave, 1611.
Petrus Cunaeus, Sardi Venales, Satyra Menippea in hujus saeculi homines plerosque inepte eruditos, 1612, augmented 1617.
Caspar von Barth, De Vita, moribus, rebus gestis, divinitate G. Scioppi Apostatae, Satyricon, 1612.
Daniel Heinsius, Cras Credo, Hodie Nihil, sive Modus tandem sit Ineptia. Satyra Menippea, 1621.
Caspar Schoppe, Nescimus quid vesper serus vehat, Satyra Menippea, 1619.

Further information on these works may be found in Korkowski, (where titles and dates may occasionally differ from the above listing).

was also called, had first been printed by Erasmus' friend Beatus Rhenanus in 1515. Erasmus himself had almost certainly known it in manuscript before that date, since he had referred to it in the preface to the Praise of Folly and had cast his satire on Pope Julius II as a mock-apotheosis.[93] The Praise of Folly, the Apocolocyntosis, and Synesius' encomium of baldness (fourth century) were all issued in the same volume in 1517.[94] The parts of the Apocolocyntosis that were most frequently imitated were the proemium, the interpolated verse passages, and the other-worldly scenes of trial and judgment.

Most of the Menippean Satires by the authors named above exhibit a format roughly similar to the Apocolocyntosis and to Lucian's Menippus and Icaromenippus. Most are set at or within the portals of hell or heaven (or on the moon) or successively in both places. The device of the dream is the preferred means of relaxing the bonds of probability when the narrator himself claims to have witnessed the events he relates. Curio's and Lipsius' satires appear to have set this fashion. The dreamer typically views his enemies called to trial before a tribunal of shades or gods who are either mythological, legendary, or historical figures. Accusation, judgment, and punishment follow in due course. In Lipsius' Satyra Menippea Somnium, for example, over-

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93. v. Marcia L. Colish, "Seneca's Apocolocyntosis as a Possible Source for Erasmus' Julius Exclusus", Renaissance Quarterly XXIX (1976), 361-68.

94. This was the edition of the Praise of Folly that Burton owned. v. Rosalie Colie, "Some Notes On Burton's Erasmus", Renaissance Quarterly 20 (1967), 335-41.

zealous critical emendators are brought before Cicero, Varro, and other classical authors at a meeting of the Roman senate. In Cunaeus' Sardi Venales certain modern theologians must come before a council which includes Erasmus, Agricola, Pico, and Menippus. Alternatively, the councillors themselves may become the objects of satire. Such is the case in the Satyre Menippée, which reveals the proceedings of the Estates General called by the Holy League in 1593 in the form of speeches by Catholic plotters. Reboul's reply takes a similar form.

In their fanciful titles and mixture of prose and verse these satires also imitate the Menippean form, without, however, always succeeding in emulating Seneca's and Lucian's wit. Conspicuous allusion is made to the less well known Menippean authors. Barth's Cave Canem, Heinsius' Hercules tuam fidem, Virgula Divina and Cras Credo, Hodie Nihil, Cunaeus' Sardi Venales and Schoppe's Nescimus quid vesper serus vehat, all borrow their titles from lost satires of Varro.[95] In commendatory verses to Puteanus' Comus, Heinsius addresses his friend with these lines:

> Seu te Menippi, seu Bionei juvant
> Non inverecundi sales...
>
> (Whether the not immodest wit of Bion
> Or of Menippus comes to your aid...)[96]

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95. Korkowski, p.429, mistakenly calls these satires "reconstructions" of Varro; they do not develop the fragments to which the titles refer.

96. Puteanus, Comus, Louvain, 1611, p.11.

Cunaeus issued his edition and translation of Julian's Caesares in the same volume as his own Sardi Venales. This somewhat antiquarian enthusiasm is quite understandable in university writers who were editors of classical texts. It also proceeds from a desire to apologize by appeal to precedent for writing satire and for using what was considered a mongrel literary form.[97] A degree of pedantry is probably also present. These satires are written 'by the book'.

Theological controversy, primarily centering on the activities of the Jesuits, is the mainspring of most of the satires to which I have referred.[98] Personal vendettas, philological disputes, Dutch and Flemish ecclesiastical politics, and occasionally broader intellectual satire, as in Donne's Ignatius, are among other matters treated. Literary invention is generally subordinated to the demands of polemic, but not always. In Puteanus' Comus, for instance, the fantastic element overwhelms a satire on the gluttony of the Dutch.[99] Heinsius' Cras Credo, Hodie Nihil contains passages of imaginative Lucianic writing. Cunaeus' Sardi Venales rises to eloquence in some of its speeches. The Satyre Menippée apart, however, none of these satires,

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97. See for example Casaubon's censure of Varro's style in the Saturae Menippeae, cited by Korkowski, p. 433,n.45.

98. In providing background to Donne's Ignatius, Korkowski tends to overlook the other subjects treated in these satires.

99. A French translation of part of Comus by C. Sobry may be found in Latomus I (1937), 113-40 and 211-29.

including Donne's, makes compelling reading today. As the recreations and skirmishes of some of the most learned men in Europe, they found in their own day a readership that included men like Burton, who refers to several of them in the Anatomy, and King James, who may have encouraged Donne to enter the lists.[100]

It would be wrong to see in these satires the culmination of the Renaissance development of the Menippean genre. They represent rather a scholarly adaptation of certain Menippean plots for the purposes of controversy. The philosophical reach of the menippea is scarcely exploited, and again with the exception of the Satyre Menippée, neither is the comic.

The Anatomy of Melancholy as Menippean Satire

It is now time to reopen the question of the nature of the Anatomy of Melancholy. In chapter one, we saw that for all its ties to the Renaissance medical book and the Ramist anatomy, Burton's Anatomy could not be wholly accounted for with reference to either of these expository forms. Having asserted in that chapter that the Anatomy belongs to literature and to the genre of Menippean satire, I have since assumed it. The point still requires demonstration. The reader who all along has granted my assumptions will have anticipated my arguments; I hope they may persuade whomever has not.

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100. v. Healy, introduction to Donne's Ignatius, xxvi.

Menippean satires are built on the relation within a work of an expository form (usually serious, always monological) and a challenge to that form. In antiquity the philosophical epistle was turned to seriocomic purposes by Menippus himself; the philosophical dialogue by Lucian; the guidebook and the traveller's tale by Varro (Periplous) In the Renaissance, the declamation and the rhetorical paradox were developed by some writers along Menippean lines. So too was the technical treatise, of which there are other English examples of Menippean transformation besides Burton's. One of them, Sir John Harington's A New Discourse of a Stale Subject, Called the Metamorphosis of Ajax (1596) combines practical and evidently serious proposals for the construction of flush toilets in English houses with topical satire on affairs of court, literary fashions, economic conditions, and "against malcontents, Epicures, Atheists, heretickes, & carelesse & dissolute Christians, and especially, against pride and sensualitie".[101] The most technical section of Harington's works bears the title "An Anatomie of the Metamorphosed Ajax". Harington classes his book with Renaissance mock-encomia, among them Rabelais' "beastly treatise onely to examine what is the fittest thing to wype withall".[102] The intermingling of verses, the catalogues, the verbal extravagance and unwieldy erudition of the

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101. Harington, A New Discourse, ed. E.S. Donno, London, 1962, p. 182.

102. ibid., p. 64.

Metamorphosis are Rabelaisian, and of course Menippean characteristics. Harington was, in fact, one of the first writers to imitate Rabelais in English.[103]

The first to translate him, Sir Thomas Urquhart, may himself have been led by Rabelais' example to write learned satire. The nature of his two treatises Ekskybalauron (1652) and Logopandecteision, Introduction to the Universal Language (1653) is not clear. What seems in them to be wit is so recherché that only their author, or one willing to undertake research on the universal language movement, is in a position to appreciate it. One who has done so writes that although some of Urquart's proposals are sensible, "there are elements that suggest at least partially satirical intention",[104] among them linguistic invention (or rather obscurantism) and an exaggerated pedantry that recalls Rabelais. In Logopandecteision, Urquart claims that he cannot get on with the universal reform of learning until his creditors have been driven away, invectives against whom consume the better part of the work. The idea of a universal logical language falls prey to human purposes and the private visions of a projector.

In similar fashion, Burton's Anatomy appropriates the forms of the medical monograph and Ramist anatomy and puts them to seriocomic ends. Burton does not repudiate these

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103. ibid., introduction, p. 19; v. Huntingdon Brown, Rabelais in English Literature, Cambridge, Mass., 1933, pp. 55-70.

104. Vivian Salmon, The Works of Francis Lodwick, London, 1972, p.28.

forms; on the contrary, he finds them serviceable in supporting his wide-ranging exposition and comprehensive therapeutic design. He does establish a distance from them, however, which opens them up to dialogue and to the entire complex of Menippean themes. The effects of this distancing are immediately apparent in the sheer scale of Burton's Anatomy. It gives the impression of being a book out of control. Transgression of stylistic norms becomes the rule for Burton. He caricatures many of the fashions of the learned writing of his time. In a "scribbling age" (20), Burton out-scribbles his contemporaries. He had probably been taught the Erasmian ideal of composition, "breviter et copiose dicere",[105] in his hated days as a grammar scholar; he took his revenge in the Anatomy, in which he is copious without being also selective. When citation of authority was commonplace, Burton appears to consult every book ever addressed to the subject he is considering. Interpolation of sentences from classical authors was an accepted element of English prose style; Burton lards his treatise with so much Latin as to make it, as he says, a "Macaronicon" (25). The plain, artless, Senecan style verges in Burton's hands on the stream of consciousness of automatic writing: "effudi quicquid dictavit genius meus" (31), he says.

The Anatomy contains the characteristic Menippean stuffing: anecdotes, characters, essays, verses, catalogues,

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105. v. Erasmus, De Duplici Copia Verborum ac Rerum (1512), chaps. I-V, Opera I, Leiden, 1703, reprinted Hildesheim, 1961.

quotations, digressions, scraps of autobiography, utopian and practical schemes, technical and learned languages, facts, examples, jest, vituperation, and exchanges between author and adversary in the manner of the classical diatribe. Although it is true that the Renaissance medical treatise is also often various, the partial precedents for Burton's range of subject matter fail to overwhelm the reader with their diversity in the way that Burton's Anatomy does. When Burton himself appeals to other expository works as precedents for his own, instead of excusing his own work he endangers others by contagion. To the reader intent on having a treatise like Timothy Bright's or an anatomy like Anthony Zara's, Burton's Anatomy must seem, as Lucian's dialogues did to his critics, "a strange phenomenon, made up of different elements, like a centaur".[106] To the reader familiar with Lucian or his Renaissance imitators, however, the phenomenon is recognizable as the intrinsically mixed form of a Menippean satire.

If evidence of the Anatomy's distance from the conventional technical treatise is to be found everywhere in the book, the agency by which distance is achieved may be specifically located in its "Satyricall Preface" and in the character of Democritus Jr. It goes without saying that a satirical preface and persona (the preface half as long

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106. v. supra. p.79.

as this dissertation) were not typical features of Renaissance medical or other expository works. The preface, which the title-page announces as "conducing to the following discourse", stands outside the body of Burton's systematic anatomy of melancholy. Democritus Jr., characterized in the preface, addresses the reader throughout the Anatomy as its fictional author. Preface and persona present the point of view from which the Anatomy's three partitions are to be read. That point of view could, however, be inferred from the body of the Anatomy itself, even if the preface did not exist and Democritus Jr. were never named or characterized. As it stands, the preface both directs the reading of the discourse it precedes and provides a metafictional commentary upon it, both anticipating and complicating the work of reading and criticism.

Lawrence Babb voices a common view of Burton's Anatomy when he suggests that in it "a purpose is superimposed upon a purpose", that is, that a "commentary on men and manners" overlies a "psychiatric treatise".[107] The relation between the medical treatise and the commentary on man is not one of superposition, however, or even of elaboration, but of transference. Specifically, it is one of metonymy. The figurative presentation of melancholy in the preface ("truly or metaphorically, 'tis all one" [40]) creates the distance

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107. Babb, Sanity in Bedlam, p.28.

from medical orthodoxy which makes simple imitation of the decorum of the medical book or the Ramist anatomy impossible. The paradox of the preface (that the whole world is mad) exposes the inadequacy not only of a particular doxon (that only part of the world is mad) but also that of the system of doxa of which the conventional medical treatise is made. Through his preface and his unstable narrator, Burton denies the assumptions on which systematic treatises are built (for example, that diseases can be isolated and that authors possess authority). The limitations of the expository treatise, however, provide the basis for the literary fiction. Preface and persona transfer the entire Anatomy (including the one-quarter of it Babb considers properly psychiatric) from the realm of expository to that of fictive discourse, from literal to symbolic expression. One could read Thomas Walkington's Optick Glasse of Humours or Hercules de Saxonia's Tractatus Posthumus de Melancholia figuratively; one must read Burton's Anatomy figuratively, in order to avoid Babb's mixed purposes or some version of them. The Anatomy itself performs such a reading (of Walkington, say, or of the sober treatise that Burton fails to write). Burton's Anatomy at once imitates and displaces the methodical medical monograph. Burton "projects a new world into a new orbit" (to borrow Eliot's words of Jonson's satire).[108] He re-creates a psychiatric treatise in the sphere of literature, above the moon with Menippus, in a timeless fictional realm.

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108. T.S. Eliot, Selected Essays, London, 1951, p.159.

The extension into man's being at large that most medical treatises assume in some degree is achieved in Burton's Anatomy by an act of wit: Burton narrows the field of his analysis to a particular humour or condition but makes it stand for the whole of man's life. The Anatomy turns the trend toward specialization (as evidenced by the rise of medical monographs) against itself. Burton specializes in melancholy but relates everything human to the disease. The conceit on which the design of the Anatomy depends is that a treatise on melancholy is at the same time an essay on man. The reader turning from Burton's title-page to begin a medical monograph finds that not melancholy, but all mankind, and most particularly that he himself is the object of Burton's dissection. The hide-and-seek of Burton's first paragraph gives way to three direct statements, two by way of quotation:

> Non hic Centauros, non Gorgonas, Harpyasque
> Invenies, hominem pagina nostra sapit.
>
> No Centaurs here, or Gorgons look to find,
> My subject is of man and humankind.
>
> Thou thyself art the subject of my discourse.
>
> Quicquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas,
> Gaudia, discursus, nostri farrago libelli.
>
> Whate'er men do, vows , fear, in ire, in sport,
> Joys, wand'rings, are the sum of my report. (15-16)

The abrupt descent from Martial's emphatic and generalized "hominem" to "thou thyself" does not shift Burton's ground but rather declares the equivalence of man in his general and particular aspect. The reader himself is to serve as an exemplum of all "humankind". Burton's assumption is

the same as Montaigne's: "chaque homme porte la forme entiere de l'humaine condition".[109] No individual reader may suffer from every species of melancholy that Burton describes, but as every son of Adam is subject to the fall and the disease, all of humanity's ills are potentially his; the essential form of human experience does not differ from individual to individual. Furthermore, the reader, the "thou", is not merely the physical holder of Burton's book but a fictus adversarius whom Burton may fashion as he pleases, a rhetorical fiction whom he may load with all the heterogeneous attributes of man. The quotation from Juvenal, like the conclusion of a syllogism, suggests that Burton's everyman will be answerable for whatever befalls any member of his race: quicquid agunt homines, Here Comes Everybody. As a humour or particular disease, then, melancholy is not the subject of Burton's Anatomy, but only as it is an extended figure for the human condition. Discussing the symptoms of melancholy, Burton complains of the difficulty of finding out "the heart of man, a melancholy man" (I, 408). The apposition is assumed throughout the Anatomy. Near the end of Burton's preface, the humour of melancholy is assimilated to the body of man himself:

> If hereafter, anatomizing this surly humour, my hand slip, as an unskilful prentice I lance too deep, and cut through the skin and all at unawares, make it smart, or cut awry, pardon a rude hand, an unskilful knife, 'tis a most difficult thing to keep an even tone, a perpetual tenor, and not sometimes to lash out; difficile est satiram non scribere. (123)

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109. Montaigne, Essais, III, ii, Editions de la Pleiade, ed. A. Thibaudet and Maurice Rat, Paris, 1962, p.782.

Burton anatomizes the humour, but the reader feels the knife. Burton imagines himself performing not so much an anatomy of melancholy as a vivisection of mankind.

It is apt that Burton should frame his "Satyricall Preface" with quotations from Juvenal's own profession of intention in his first satire. Burton does not apply them to his preface alone, however, but to his entire discourse: Burton's essay on man takes the form of a satire against mankind. Just as Rochester maintains the paradox of man's brutishness in order to expose man's philosophical pride, so Burton paradoxically views mankind from the perspective of universal madness and melancholy in order to lay open his post-lapsarian condition. In Burton's hands satire is a means of discovering man to himself, not merely of scourging him in the manner of a Marston. Satire ranges itself against man the better to assay him, to force his nature to manifest itself. A satirist need not repent his calling in order to show himself a sympathetic moralist; he need only shift, or drop his rhetorical pose. In the second part of his "Satire Against Mankind", Rochester draws the characters of men before whom he would recant his paradox. Burton does not stand so upon conditions, but freely offers to anyone who will take it advice by which folly may be moderated or suffering relieved. Far from being the failure of satire, consolation is frequently the obverse of it.

Although the satire of Burton's Anatomy is first and foremost general and unconfined, it is also directed in

conventional satirical tones at specific targets. Burton neither names nor points at particular men, however. In this practice he follows the example of those "such as generally tax vice", i.e. "the Varronists and Lucians of our time", particularly Erasmus, who formulated a defence of such satire in his letter to Martin Dorp concerning the Praise of Folly. "I hate their vices, not their persons", says Burton (121). Burton's satire, like Erasmus', is not so general, however, that particular classes of men and their particular vices are not directly aimed at. When Burton criticizes his countrymen for their idleness, for example, it is the gentry that he takes hardest to task. The buying and selling of church livings and of academic degrees was a practice that especially galled Burton and towards which he appears to have had reason for personal resentment, as one who refused to be a party to it and was thereby denied ecclesiastical preferment. Among others of Burton's bêtes noires are patrons ("griping patrons", "simoniacal patrons", "church-chopping patrons"), Roman Catholics, particularly the Jesuits, and Protestant schismatics, chiefly the Puritan sects. Burton is not so singleminded a satirist, though, that he cannot also blame lazy scholars and make good use of the works of Puritan divines and the reports of Jesuit explorers. Burton's satirical tone is not confined to his "Satyricall Preface", but erupts whenever his inward passions are molested (as he says) by the objects of his anatomy. The preface itself forms a sustained

argument on certain Menippean themes that will require separate treatment in the following chapter.

Predecessors and Successors

Burton declares that his work is strictly an attempt to "revive again, prosecute, and finish" the lost treatise on melancholy and madness that Democritus left imperfect two-thousand years before him. In the pseudo-Hippocratic letters, however, Democritus' search for the seat of black bile provides little more than a concrete image of his quest for the source of human folly in his harangue to Hippocrates, which forms the centerpiece of the letters. The physical cause of melancholy serves the Cynic author of the letters as an emblem for a moral disease. As I have previously noted, the comparison of moral to physical ailments was commonplace in the Greek diatribe.[110] In Democritus Jr.'s hands, examination of the physical causes and cures of melancholy is diligently pursued with an authentic feeling for the afflictions of the disease, but the moral and satirical focus of the Hippocratic story is also retained. "Because it is not impertinent to this discourse" (47), Burton inserts a considerable portion of Democritus' speech into his preface (Burton's is, in fact, the first English translation of it). "I deny not this which I have

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110. v. supra, p.49.

said savors a little of Democritus" (123), he admits after proving at some length that the world is a madhouse. Despite occasional insistences to the contrary, Democritus Jr. plays the satirist of mankind as well as the anatomist of melancholy. The two roles, united in the character of the legendary Democritus, are taken over by his seventeenth-century succenturiator. Burton's persona and his entire enterprise thus have an immediate precedent in a Menippean satire of the early first century.[111] It would be hazardous, however, to attempt to determine from Burton's words alone in what way the Hippocratic story may actually have shaped the Anatomy of Melancholy. All of Burton's accounts of his work have the air of having been improvised after the event.

Although each of the thirteen-hundred authors whom Burton cites contributes something to the Anatomy, it is principally to the classical and Renaissance Menippean writers and to the Roman verse satirists that Burton turns when he looks for inspiration, guidance, and support. Let us survey his acquaintance with these writers.

Of all the Greek authors whom Burton gathers into the Anatomy (all "cited out of their interpreters", i.e. in Latin translation), none is named more frequently than Lucian.[112]

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111. Although Burton knew the authenticity of the Hippocratic letters had been challenged, he appears to have regarded them as genuine. Burton was not particular as to the nature of his sources, and the fact remains that whether Burton thought the letters apocryphal or not, they are satirical and were used by him for purposes of satire.

112. Simon, Robert Burton, p.33, numbers 127 references to Lucian in the Anatomy.

Burton owned the four-volume Greek and Latin edition of Gilbertus Cognatus (Cousin) who had been the companion and secretary to Erasmus in his last years. It was evidently a treasured possession, for in the appendix to his will Burton made special provision that it be given to one Thomas Iles, the son of a physician of his acquaintance.[113] Burton also gives evidence of familiarity with the Latin Lucian edited by Jacob Micyllus (III, 4) and with Erasmus' expressions of admiration for Lucian in the prefaces to his translations (III, 388). With the possible exception of Horace, Burton appears to have taken no other author so to heart. Burton quarried Lucian for anecdotes and apt quotations, but he also turned to him as a touchstone when his own stronger opinions were involved. "That adamantine persecutor of superstition" served Burton as he had served Erasmus, particularly in the section on religious melancholy.[114] When the pretensions of philosophers are in question, it is Lucian's Piscator, Icaromenippus, and Necyomantia that the author of Philosophaster remembers. Burton naturally recalls De iis qui mercede conductis degunt in his discussion of the miseries of scholars; the lot of the "trencher chaplain" in Burton's day was no better than that of Lucian's philosopher in a wealthy Roman household. Charon's view of the world from Parnassus in Charon is Democritus Jr.'s in the

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113. Burton's will has been printed by F. Madan, "Burton's Will", Oxford Bibliographical Society Proceedings and Papers I (1922-26), 218-20.

114. Burton uses the phrase at III, 357. Erasmus had applied the same words (adamantinus omnium superstitionum insectator) to Lucian in Adagia I, 7, 77.

preface (47). When Burton journeys to heaven and hell in the "Digression of Air" in ironic search of an end to the perplexities of human knowledge, it is "with Lucian's Menippus" that he travels.

Menippus himself Burton knows of course only by report. That is enough:

> I did sometime laugh and scoff with Lucian, and satirically tax with Menippus, lament with Heraclitus, sometimes again I was petulanti splene cachinno, and then again, urere bilis jecur, I was much moved to see that abuse which I could not mend. (19)

(The Latin quotations are from Persius and Horace, respectively). This is four parts satire to one part lamentation. The proportion varies according to the member anatomized, as does the tone of the satire, from playful to cutting. Even the tears of Heraclitus are a satirical topos, however, and as Stewart thinks,[115] perhaps originated by Menippus himself.

I have already noticed the correspondences between Democritus Jr.'s self-presentation in the opening paragraphs of the Anatomy and Seneca's of himself at the beginning of the Apocolocyntosis.[116] So closely does Burton's alternate ingratiation and abuse of the reader resemble that of the proemium of the Apocolocyntosis that it seems probable that Burton took a hint from Seneca as well as a quotation. No more than a hint was needed, for the player's mask obviously

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115. v. supra, p.75.

116. v. supra, p.65.

came naturally to Burton. In addition to the Apocolocyntosis itself, Burton also knew the works of Renaissance imitators who themselves had mimicked Seneca's entrance. Lipsius, Heinsius, and Donne copy Seneca's assertion of authorial prerogative.[117] Lipsius confidently announces that he will report "Quid hoc anno Romae in Senatu, dictum, actum, cautum sit".[118] Donne insists, like Burton, on his right to anonymity:

> Doest thou seeke after the Author? It is in vaine; for hee is harder to be found then the parents of Popes were in the old times".[119]

Burton's opening is by far the most original and dramatically effective of these, but a Menippean convention lies behind it.

Burton knew Varro's and Petronius' remains well enough to lament what was lost. He quotes Petronius frequently. In Apuleius' Metamorphoses, it was the episode of the laughter of Hypata that Burton particularly remembered, for he refers to it on several occasions and concludes his preface with a promise to sacrifice his reader to Apuleius' God of Laughter if he objects to Democritus Jr.'s levity. The Roman satirists, including Martial, were naturally very familiar to Burton. Burton compares his own modest nature to that reported of Persius. Without adopting Juvenal's

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117. cf. Korkowski, op.cit., p.427.

118. Justus Lipsius, Satyra Menippea Somnium.

119. Donne, Ignatius, p.3.

severity, Burton makes use of his defence of the satirical vocation. Horace supplied more patches for Burton's cento than any other writer.[120] His diatribe on the species of madness (Satires, II, 3) is a satirical anatomy of which numerous fragments are scattered through Burton's preface. Lastly among antique writers of satire, the Christian fathers, Jerome, Cyprian, and others, themselves inheritors of Roman satire and Greek popular philosophy, are put to use in the Anatomy as much for their sharp animadversions on human behaviour as for their formulation of Christian doctrine.

Burton's close acquaintance with the classical satirists was complemented by his familiarity with the moderns. More and Erasmus are, I think, the authors whom Burton most resembles in spirit and whose Lucianic works lie behind the strategy of his own. Like More, Burton was a civic humanist, i.e. a scholar determined to put his learning to use for the good of his nation. Many of the reforms Burton advocates in the section of his preface dealing with the melancholy of nations, chiefly of England, are drawn from Book I of Utopia. Book II left its mark on the "poetical commonwealth" of Burton's preface, which is the first utopia to be written originally in English. Burton may have received the idea for his fictional identity indirectly from More, through Erasmus' descriptions of his friend. Burton knew Juvenal, Horace, and the Hippocratic

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120. Simon, op.cit., records 180 references to or borrowings from Horace.

epistles, but he also knew the preface to the Praise of Folly, in which More is said "in communi mortalium vita Democritum quendam agere".[121] Erasmus repeated this characterization in the life of More he sent in a letter to Hutten.[122] Democritus' mask had thus been worn by the foremost of English humanists, at least in the eyes of his Lucianic comrade in arms, Erasmus. With Erasmus too Burton has much in common. Both men were divines who wrote satire, and both found themselves obliged to defend themselves for doing so. After declaiming, like Erasmus' Moria, upon the universal folly of the world, Democritus Jr. excuses himself by quoting from Erasmus' letter to Dorp. Burton's Anatomy is too original a book to be approached in terms of its debt to any other single work, but of all the partial literary precedents for it, the Praise of Folly is the most important. We know from the markings in Burton's personal copy that he had not only read it but studied it.[123]

Burton's knowledge of Renaissance Lucianism naturally extends beyond the work of Erasmus and More. Besides the works named above, Burton borrows from or cites the following works: Pontano's dialogues, Agrippa's De Vanitate, Hutten's poem Nemo and the Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum, Folegno's Merlini Cocaii Macaronicon, Des Periers's Cymbalum

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121. EE I, no. 222, ll. 17-18 (p. 460).

122. EE IV, no. 999, l. 126 (p. 16).

123. Colie, "Some Notes on Burton's Erasmus".

Mundi, Rabelais' Tiers Livre, Harington's Metamorphosis of Ajax (as well as his translation of Ariosto), Andreae's Menippus (among other works), Lipsius' Satyra Menippea Somnium, Puteanus' Comus, Donne's Ignatius, Cunaeus' Sardi Venales, and Heinsius' Hercules Tuam Fidem.[124] Though none of these works shapes the Anatomy in any significant way, their mention in its pages offers further evidence of Burton's interest in humanist satire in the Lucianic vein.

It is less perverse than it sounds to speak of a book's being influenced by works that succeed it in time. Eliot has plausibly maintained that every new work of literature modifies the line of those that have come before it.[125] A book's characters, style, plot, genre, and meaning are not immutable but ceaselessly change as literature changes. Burton's Anatomy may have influenced Sterne's Tristram Shandy, and Tristram Shandy in turn may affect our reading of Burton.[126] Beckett's Malone Dies modifies our perceptions of both Sterne and Burton and enhances our awareness of the common tradition within which all three authors write. In English literature, this

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124. I have been unable to trace the source of the eight Latin quotations Burton added to the 1624 Anatomy from what he identified in the margin only as "Sat. Menip." The quotations occur at pages 70 and 70n; I, 307n; I, 312; I, 324; I, 326; I, 350n; II, 191; II, 207n. Simon incorrectly supposes the Satyre Menippée to be their source.

125. T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent", in Selected Essays, London, 1951, 13-22, p.15.

126. v. infra, chap. 6, for discussion of Tristram Shandy and the Anatomy.

tradition also includes such works as A Tale of a Tub, The Memoirs of Scriblerus, the Variorum Dunciad, the novels of Peacock, Blake's "Island in the Moon", Sartor Resartus, Carroll's Alice books, Ulysses, and Finnegans Wake.[127] The study of influences on Burton's Anatomy need not stop at 1651 (the date of the last edition to incorporate new revisions by Burton) but might be extended to Beckett's trilogy or even to the latest best-selling manual of mental self-help. The literary scholar's ideal of a linguistically transparent and historically arrested text is no more than a useful illusion. That said, let us pass (as in a dream) to the appearance of the Anatomy of Melancholy in 1621 and to a reading of its title-page and preface.

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127. v. Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, pp. 307-311.

THE ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY,

WHAT IT IS.

WITH ALL THE KINDES, CAVSES, SYMPTOMES, PROGNOSTICKES, AND SEVERALL CVRES OF IT.

IN THREE MAINE PARTITIONS with their ſeuerall SECTIONS, MEMBERS, and SVBSECTIONS.

PHILOSOPHICALLY, MEDICALLY, HISTORICALLY, OPENED AND CVT VP.

BY

DEMOCRITVS *Iunior.*

With a Satyricall PREFACE, conducing to *the following Diſcourſe.*

MACRON,
Omne meum, Nihil meum.

AT OXFORD,
Printed by IOHN LICHFIELD and IAMES SHORT, for HENRY CRIPPS.
Anno Dom. 1621.

1. Title page of the first edition (1621).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE "SATYRICALL PREFACE"

This was the title-page that passing, or tarrying, inhabitants of Oxford saw displayed early in 1621 in the shop of Henry Cripps, the publisher of Burton's Anatomy. The exaggerated fanfare of the title and inscription proper culminates in the false cadence of a pseudonym: "By Democritvs Iunior". The guessing game begins: is this junior Democritus a follower of Democritus the philosopher? If so, is it to Democritus' laughter, his melancholy, or his atomic theory that Democritus Jr. subscribes? The announcement of a "Satyricall Preface" raises further questions about the nature of the book behind the title page, for satire would seem to have no place in a treatise on melancholy, especially one bearing so resoundingly technical a title. The epigraph, "Omne meum, Nihil meum", attributed to Macrobius, leaves the onlooker with yet another riddle.[1]

If he abandons his other business and turns to page one in the hope of learning the solution to these puzzles, the inquirer will find Burton, or rather Democritus Jr.,

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1. This epigraph was removed from the title page in the edition of 1628 (though retained in the text of the preface, where it also appears) and was replaced by Horace's "Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci". "Omne meum, nihil meum" does not appear in Macrobius and has not been traced.

awaiting him:

> Gentle Reader, I presume thou wilt be very inquisitiue to knowe what personate Actor this is, that so insolently intrudes vpon this common Theater, to the worlds view, arrogating another mans name, whence hee is, why he doth it, and what hee hath to say? [2]

Democritus Jr. may well presume the reader's curiosity, for the title-page of the book that bears his name is deliberately cryptic. His next words, however, only compound its mysteries, for they defy the reader's desire for an explanation of the author's identity and his motives for writing: "Seeke not after that which is hid". Such defiance notwithstanding, mid-way through the first page the masked speaker relents, or appears to do so, when he promises "in some sort to give thee satisfaction" by providing "a reason both of this vsurped Name, Title, and Subiect". He does in fact honour his promise in the remainder of the lengthy preface, but the satisfaction he gives, as Stanley Fish has argued,[3] is not of the sort that the reader naively expects. Whatever satisfactions the reader may take from Burton's preface only involve him in new difficulties and "conduce" to his continuing into the Anatomy's partitions and so through the entire treatise of 875 quarto pages.

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2. I follow the edition of 1621, p. 1. A facsimile of this edition has been published by Theatrum Orbis Terrarum (Amsterdam) and Da Capo Press (New York), 1971.

3. Stanley Fish, Self-Consuming Artifacts, pp. 304-305.

A Reason of the Title

Burton requires only one paragraph to give a "reason" for his title, and in it he deploys in miniature the strategies of the preface at large:

> If the title and inscription offend your gravity, were it a sufficient justification to accuse others, I could produce many sober treatises, even sermons themselves, which in their fronts carry more phantastical names. Howsoever, it is a kind of policy in these days, to prefix a phantastical title to a book which is to be sold; for, as larks come down to a day-net, many vain readers will tarry and stand gazing like silly passengers at an antic picture in a painter's shop, that will not look at a judicious piece. And, indeed, as Scaliger observes, "nothing more invites a reader than an argument unlooked for, unthought of, and sells better than a scurrile pamphlet," tum maxime cum novitas excitat palatum. "Many men," saith Gellius, "are very conceited in their inscriptions," "and able" (as Pliny quotes out of Seneca) "to make him loiter by the way that went in haste to fetch a midwife for his daughter, now ready to lie down." For my part, I have honourable precedents for this which I have done: I will cite one for all, Anthony Zara, Pap. Episc., his Anatomy of Wit, in four sections, members, subsections, etc., to be read in our libraries. (20)

Burton first calls attention to the very oddity of his title, for the benefit of any reader who has failed to take account of it. To read Burton's title without feeling the offence to gravity is to refuse his hint. Burton presumes much of his reader, often with uncanny accuracy, but "thou" the reader is in essence a fiction whom Burton creates and manipulates by assigning to him certain attributes and reactions. Whatever the actual reader's experience of

Burton's prose (upon which Burton also depends and which he also manipulates), his first obligation is faithfully to act his part as Burton prompts him. Most readers will in fact need little urging to hear in Burton's title-page the rhetoric of the circus bill or hawker of patent medicines.

Burton proceeds to defend himself against the charge of levity that he brings against himself in the reader's name. His defence, however, is first hypothetical ("were it a sufficient justification"), then ambiguous ("Howsoever, it is a kind of policy").[4] With "Howsoever", Burton obliquely concedes that he himself has co-operated with the policy of the times in prefixing fantastical titles to books. His succeeding ridicule of this policy thus taxes his own practice as well as that of his fellow authors. Moreover, it is aimed not only at the baits of authors but at the susceptibility of readers to them. Just as "larks come down to a day-net," Burton writes, "vain readers" will be drawn to an "antic picture" or a fantastical title. (Burton did in fact surround his own title with the familiar pictures of representative melancholics in their fits in his third edition of 1628). To read Burton's apology for his title and inscription is to be told that one has come down to his net.

The quotations from Scaliger, Gellius, and Pliny,

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4. My emphasis.

directed as they are against Burton's own book (with its "unlooked for" preface) as well as against scurrile pamphlets and conceited inscriptions, must be taken with three grains of salt. With Pliny's words (or rather Seneca's), only the most credulous (and humourless) reader will have failed to see through the self-righteous defender of sobriety to the farceur he only partially conceals. The circumstance described is rendered no less preposterous for being cited out of two such venerable authors as Seneca and Pliny. Whatever the effect of the quotations, the triumph of Burton's well-supported argument can be sustained only at his own and his reader's expense. Lastly, shifting once more ("For my part..."), but still to uncertain ground, Burton denies any resemblance betweeen his title and those the authorities complain of, and he cites "honourable precedents for this which I have done". He means of course 'for an anatomy of something in sections and members', but he states it in such a way that another meaning, 'for the impression created by a fantastical title', is equally possible. If there is any substantial difference between the "honourable precedents" he names[5] and those others (carefully unnamed) which he has previously accused of fantasticality, it is not immediately apparent. Burton's conclusion to the defence of his style is more direct:

> All I say is this, that I have precedents for it, which Isocrates calls perfugium

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5. He adds in the margin "Anatomy of Popery, Anatomy of Immortality, Angelus Salas' Anatomy of Antimony, etc." This catalogue resembles many others in Burton's Anatomy whose intent is clearly satirical.

> iis qui peccant, others as absurd, vain, idle, illiterate, etc. (26)

None of Burton's defences wholly convinces, for each is couched in hypothesis or qualification; yet none is so implausible that one is compelled wholly to reject Burton's apparent belief in his own purposes. One movement of the prose prosecutes the avowed design of giving a reason for the title; another openly reduces that design (and everything that depends upon it) to absurdity. What poses as a straightforward defence of Burton's title and inscription contains not only satire on the foolish "policy of these days", but backhanded mockery of the apologist himself, his book, and his reader. While Burton's offended fictus adversarius presumably acquiesces before Burton's reasoned apology, the actual reader (as Burton well realizes) registers every offence to reason and gravity that is laid before him.

It is clear enough that Burton's prose is shot through with irony, but it is not so clear where his irony leads. Subvert as he will, Burton refuses to take account of his work of destruction, as if it did not finally matter whether his title, its beholders, and the policy of the times were absurd or reasonable, or indeed that the distinction were worth making. In view of what has gone before, the aplomb with which Burton closes the passage in question is absolutely unjustifiable - but that provides in another sense its very justification. The implication seems to be that where folly is universal and unavoidable, it might as well assume a mask of equanimity and purpose.

Burton sets forth a series of oppositions, between gravity and offence to gravity, between reason and unreason, the sober and the fantastical, the judicious and the antic, in such a way as to accommodate both sets of categories to his title and his defence of it. Finally, Burton's irony does not point to anything beyond itself. The dizzying feinting and double-feinting on the surface of his style is a reflection of the detached, ambivalent contemplation of human affairs that underlies Burton's representation of himself and the world throughout the Anatomy.

The patterns we have traced in the passage we have been reading are repeated in the preface as a whole. Having first presumed his reader inquisitive, Burton next supposes him hostile; as he satisfies the reader's curiosity by elaborating the riddles that have aroused it, so he answers hostility by returning it upon the reader in kind. Burton's defence of his book quickly takes the shape of a satire on those against whom he must defend it. The argument of Juvenal's Satire I, in which the poet's defence of his art is turned against the city that provokes his indignation, reappears by way of quotation at salient points in Burton's preface. Apology and satire often beget each other and are not always easily distinguishable. Burton's conspicuous but disingenuous vacillation between exaggerated versions of both poses at the end of the preface points to their equivalence. The 'apology for satire' is in fact one of satire's perennial plots. Burton's demonstration that the world universally suffers from melancholy and madness consumes by way of apology the bulk of "Democritus Junior to the Reader".

The one feature of Burton's satire that may seem unusual, or at any rate unaccountable in terms of self-defence, is his ridicule of himself and his undertaking. It is covert in his defence of his title, but it becomes open, even defiant, in his defence of his subject. Burton's is not, however, strictly a self-defence. The satirist does not seek to defend himself but a moral or intellectual vision. He is often at pains to shift the burden of motivation from his own shoulders onto an external standard. He has no necessary immunity from the consequences of his vision and may therefore become the object of his own satire. The Greek and Roman diatribe furnishes many examples of satiric self-mockery and self-analysis. Folly's jests at the expense of Erasmus and humanist oratory in the Praise of Folly illustrate the same principle. Menippean satire in particular tends toward inclusiveness; the notion of a privileged person, class, or occupation is alien to the satiric logic of the genre. Menippean works often parody themselves from within, lest satire itself should escape satire.[6] The leading thesis of Burton's preface, as we shall see, is that no man, Democritus Jr. naturally included, is free from melancholy and madness. Chief among the evidence that Democritus Jr. advances against himself is the very preface he is writing.

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6. V. Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, p.117.

The Narrator

From the first words of "Democritus Junior to the Reader" (as the preface is headed) to the signature of Robert Burton, placed at the foot of "The Conclusion of the Author to the Reader" that ends the 1621 edition of the Anatomy, the identity of the speaker, or more properly, the provenance of the narrative voice, is the object of extended equivocation. We must ask ourselves who is actually represented as speaking and writing. Who is the 'I' that presumes "thou wilt be very inquisitue to knowe what personate actor this is?". Are we to take these words as Democritus Jr.'s own, as the heading encourages us to do, or as those of the authorial presenter of Democritus Jr. speaking in his own person and introducing a masked actor as yet voiceless? The remainder of the first sentence encourages the second of these alternatives, for no sooner has the speaker established first person narration than he adopts the reader's point of view toward the narrator and concludes by referring to himself in the third person: "whence hee is, why he doth it, and what hee hath to say?". Though these words are represented as being spoken by the personate Democritus Jr., they appear to be pronounced by the man behind the mask, not by the actor in his assumed role.

Burton introduces himself as a stage actor only to refuse the right of dramatic illusion by which it is permitted to play the role of another person without

reference to one's actual identity. Later, when he does insist on just this illusion, in defending himself against those who may take exception to his satire as "too light and comical for a Divine", Burton deliberately abuses its special privileges:

> I will presume to answer, with Erasmus in the like case,[7] 'Tis not I, but Democritus, Democritus dixit: you must consider what it is to speak in one's own or another's person, an assumed habit and name - a difference between him that affects or acts a prince's, a philosopher's, a magistrate's, a fool's part, and him that is so indeed - and what liberty those old satirists have had; it is a cento collected from others; not I, but they that say it ... Object then, and cavil what thou wilt, I ward all with Democritus' buckler, his medicine shall salve it; strike where thou wilt, and when: Democritus dixit, Democritus will answer it. (121-122)

If the distinction between the actual speaker and the voice which dramatic convention allows him to assume is persuasively made, it is also made to be seen through. Burton requests personal immunity only in order to defend himself in hand to hand combat with critics. His argument is playfully sophistic; it is as if a housebreaker caught in the act were to display his facemask and claim that he was only acting a burglar's part. When Burton asserts that his preface is only "a cento collected from others; not I, but they that say it", he applies the same sophism

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7. Burton quotes in the margin a line from Erasmus' preface to the Praise of Folly that is not particularly apropos. He presumably has in mind Folly's parting remarks in the declamation itself (p. 208, trans. B. Radice) or Erasmus' defense of the decorum of Folly's character in his letter to Dorp (p. 236). Even here, however, Erasmus is not defending himself, but excusing Folly, so Erasmus' case is not precisely similar to Burton's.

to the thousands of lesser masks that his quotations from other writers comprise. He himself draws the logical conclusion from this line of defence: his book is "neminis nihil" (122), the 'I' that wrote it is no one. We recall the riddle on the title page, which Burton repeats with regard to his quotations in the preface: "Omne meum, nihil meum, 'tis all mine and none mine" (24). So too the Anatomy is at once all Democritus Jr.'s (as actor, as mask) and all Burton's (as author, as masker).

Just as Democritus' dixit is also always Burton's, so Burton cannot speak in his own person without also speaking through his persona. The occasions when he appears to do so reveal on inspection that they are only appearances.

> And first of the name of Democritus; lest any man by reason of it should be deceived, expecting a pasquil, a satire, some ridiculous treatise (as I myself should have done), some prodigious tenent, or paradox of the earth's motion, of infinite worlds. (15)

"As I myself should have done": this aside appears to set the speaker apart from his mask and to give him the independent will to exercise another voice and occupation. However, as has frequently been observed, a satire and a ridiculous treatise (with a discussion of just those paradoxes named) do indeed follow. What 'I' should have done is precisely what Democritus Jr. does. The parenthesis contrasts an 'I' prone to writing "some ridiculous treatise" with a Democritus who is not so inclined. Later (as we have just seen), the terms will be reversed: the voice of satire and the ridiculous will be identified as that of the laughing Democritus, while the 'I' will claim a

serious intent and plead improbable pardons. Neither of these two poses lacks broad ironic hints that its contrary is closer to the truth; taken together they suggest that the 'I' of the Anatomy is one voice, but to two persons.

"The Conclusion of the Author to the Reader" of 1621 provides another and more emphatic illustration of this phenomenon. Although "The Author" announces in his "Apologetical Appendix" that "The last section shall be mine, to cut the strings of Democritus visor, to vnmaske and shew him as he is " (Ddd 1), his voice remains disconcertingly unchanged. Soon the margin refers us back to the "Prefat. Democ." for elaboration of the author's concluding apology, and it comes as no surprise to find that almost the whole of Burton's "Conclusion" was transferred into "Democritus Junior to the Reader" in the second and subsequent editions of the Anatomy (from which the appendix has been removed). The "Robert Burton" who signs himself "From my Studie in Christ-Church Oxon. Decemb 5. 1620." is only another mask for the narrative 'I'. One might even suppose him to be the pseudonym of the author named on the Anatomy's title page, Democritus Jr. In terms of the book's fiction, it is impossible to say which has invented the other. The daughter of a future Dean of Christ Church (as imagined by another of its dons) encountered a similar conundrum with regard to the dream of the Red King.

A Reason of the Name

One may well wonder "why he doth it", why Burton employed a persona at all if the mask was to be transparent. Burton himself does not seem entirely certain about his motivations in masking himself (of course, he may have deliberately contrived to give such an impression). The more reasons he gives for his name, the less any single one of them seems a satisfactory accounting for it, and the less the entire process of assigning reasons has a meaning. Mystification and elucidation, disguise and revelation go hand in hand; the reader is never sure to which he is being subjected, and the author himself is either not certain in which he is engaged or willing to allow (if not careful to create) an ambiguity.

Although Burton's reasons for his name may raise as many questions as they answer about the mask's ultimate meaning, his immediate rhetorical object in giving them is plain enough. For all Burton's talk of habits and vizors, it soon becomes clear that the adoption of Democritus' mask manifests rather than conceals the character of the masker. Burton uses his persona first of all as a means to characterize the voice (the 'I') that presents the Anatomy. It might be observed that there is no intrinsic reason why such a characterization might not be made without the objectification of the 'I' as a mask; the 'I' of Montaigne's Essais and Browne's Religio Medici, for instance, serves as the object of its own meditation without

recourse to such a device. Alternatively, it could be argued that the germ of persona is contained in any use of the first person pronoun, and that the idea of the mask is implicit, logically and etymologically, in the concepts of person and personality that the (personal) essay presumes. Although Burton himself stimulates our awareness of just such levels of masking, his own mask may be best explained as a literary fiction.

Browne and Montaigne might be said to 'personify' or 'impersonate' their authorial selves in their writings, but as themselves, as "Thomas Browne" and "moy, Michel de Montaigne". Unlike them, Burton (that is, his narrative 'I') presents himself as impersonating someone other than himself (however alike the 'I' and its 'other' may be shown to be). In explaining why he has "arrogated another man's name", the pseudonymous voice of the Anatomy describes his own character with respect to the features which comprise his alter ego. Whatever his name, the narrative 'I' compares himself to a third-person 'he' who is both another person and the same. The author is himself only through his relation to another not himself.

The characterization of the narrative voice of the Anatomy depends therefore on two things: on the character of Democritus and on the relation to it of Democritus Jr. Neither one of these terms is determined with complete finality in the elaborate but elusive treatment Burton gives his pseudonym in the preface, but enough is established

about both to endow his mask with a particular meaning. Moreover, once the "peculiar respects" for which Burton has "usurped" Democritus' name have been disclosed, the character of Democritus Jr. is fixed. Burton presents his mask as a riddle; once he has solved it, for his reader if not also for himself, he must abide by his solution. Having assumed a role, he must then play it. He is not free, like the essayist, to develop further as himself; once his relation to his 'other' has been determined, he is bound by it. He is, as we have already seen, the prisoner of his mask: Burton's 'I' cannot speak except as the puppet of his own creation.

Democritus Jr.'s voice is consistently that of a particular actor from his first words to the "Gentle Reader" (indeed, from the title page itself), but his mask acquires a discursive meaning as he gives reasons for it. His exposition constitutes the meaning of the mask and serves as a guide to the interpretation of the work composed in its likeness and delivered by its voice. This exposition, however, is itself dramatic and must be read accordingly.

> And first of the name of Democritus; lest any man by reason of it should be deceived, expecting a pasquil, a satire, some ridiculous treatise (as I myself should have done), some prodigious tenent, or paradox of the earth's motion, of infinite worlds, in infinito vacuo, ex fortuita atomorum collisione, in an infinite waste, so caused by an accidental collision of motes in the sun, all which Democritus held, Epicurus and their master Leucippus of old maintained, and are lately revived by Copernicus, Brunus, and some others. (15)

Here are passed quickly in review, and dismissed, the two characters of Democritus most likely to spring to a Jacobean reader's mind at the sight of his name, i.e. the derider of man's follies and the philosopher of atomism. Even as the dismissals are made, however, they are belied. The preface has, after all, already been labelled "Satyricall", and the atomist's theories become the subject of a brief digression that evinces the narrator's interest in his philosophy. No sooner are these possible correspondences between Democritus and his namesake equivocally denied, than others are equivocally affirmed:

> My intent is no otherwise to use his name, than Mercurius Gallobelgicus, Mercurius Brittanicus, use the name of Mercury, Democritus Christianus, etc.; although there be some other circumstances for which I have masked myself under this vizard, and some peculiar respects which I cannot so well express, until I have set down a brief character of this our Democritus, what he was, with an epitome of his life. (16)

As Stanley Fish has remarked in his perceptive reading of Burton's opening pages, each of Burton's determinations of intent gives way before the next one.[8] Each declaration dissolves in an "although", and "some other circumstances" takes its place; even in the above passage these "other circumstances" slide into "some peculiar respects", and they in turn will yield to still others. Though the logical movement of Burton's prose never recovers from its false leads, digressions, and equivocations, its linear momentum

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8. Fish, pp. 303-08.

never registers the damage , and what ought to collapse in ruins instead runs buoyantly on.

To introduce his collection of motives, Burton supplies a collection of portraits of Democritus of Abdera, beginning with "an epitome of his life". Fish has observed "the spectacular lack of verifiable information in Burton's life of Democritus" and Burton's apparent obliviousness to its uncertain colours.[9] It can nevertheless be safely said that Burton's picture, drawn from various sources, portrays a solitary, melancholy scholar devoted to his studies. Not until Burton's last stroke is the detail supplied (from the pseudo-Hippocratic "Epistle to Damagetus") which will assume primary importance later in the preface:

> "Saving that sometimes he would walk down to the haven, and laugh heartily at such variety of ridiculous objects, which there he saw." (16)

The Democritus to whose name Burton affixes his "Jr." is presented as a historical figure, but the aspects of his life that Burton brings out are in fact those of legend. The Democritus of the Hippocratic letters, who supplies the traits of character and occupation which matter most to Burton, was already a composite literary-philosophical fiction before Democritus Jr. assumed his habit and became another.

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9. ibid., p. 308.

The speaker's next claim, "I do not presume to make any parallel", subverts the rationale behind the foregoing sketch of Democritus, undertaken as it was to enable Democritus Jr. to portray the "peculiar respects" for which he has usurped Democritus' name. "Yet thus much will I say of myself", Burton begins, and as so often in his prose, the exception or qualification becomes the substance of the succeeding argument. He proceeds to adduce certain parallels between himself and his eponymous predecessor, chiefly in the matter of the diversity of their studies, first tentatively, then even using Democritus' name in direct comparisons:

> I live still a collegiate student, as Democritus in his garden ... saving that sometimes, ne quid mentiar, as Diogenes went into the city and Democritus to the haven to see fashions, I did for my recreation now and then walk abroad, look into the world, and could not choose but make some little observation. (18-19)

This exception too will grow into something greater. Considering the scale of the work to follow, "some little observation" is stupendously understated. This emphatic resemblance between the two Democrituses, which appears to conclude the series of backhanded parallels drawn between them, is itself immediately qualified: "... not as they did [Diogenes and Democritus], to scoff or laugh at all, but with a mixed passion". I have previously quoted Burton's description of this passion,[10] presented in terms of the

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10. v. supra, p.156.

masks provided by Horace, Lucian, Menippus, Persius, and Heraclitus, in which spleen, scoffing, laughter, and lamentation are mixed. These are all attitudes that Democritus Jr. frequently assumes in the course of anatomizing melancholy.

At this point, however, he denies any connection with respect to his pseudonym between himself and the observers of mankind's follies that he names:

> In which passion howsoever I may sympathize with him or them, 'tis for no such respect I shroud myself under his name; but... (19)

Here then, we shall at last hear what respect it is, and the fall through false bottoms will have an end - or so the logic and the cadence of the prose proclaim. Instead, Burton begins to account for his motives with unsettling speculative detachment: "but either in an unknown habit to assume a little more liberty and freedom of speech..." Finally he produces his trump: "... or if you will needs know, for that reason and only respect which Hippocrates relates at large in his Epistle to Damagetus." What Burton takes, however, is only another trick. He tells the story of the <u>first part</u> of the "Epistle to Damagetus" and appears to end the matter of the name by promising to finish Democritus' imperfect (indeed lost) treatise on melancholy and madness. "You have had a reason of the name," Burton concludes. The most recent study of the <u>Anatomy</u>, that of Ruth Fox, concurs that this is <u>the</u> reason for the name.[11]

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11. Ruth Fox, <u>The Tangled Chain</u>, p. 221.

Stanley Fish, more than once bitten by Burton's deceptive assertions and almost morbidly shy of them, rightly warns of Burton's use of the indefinite article: "a reason".[12] Burton is indeed still witholding that part of Hippocrates' relation with which he has previously crowned his accounts of Democritus and himself, namely Democritus' famous satirical laughter at the world.

As we have seen from examining the Hippocratic letters themselves, the story they tell revolves around Democritus' laughter. Burton holds the point of the story in abeyance while he apologizes for his title and begins the defence of his subject. He soon turns to prove the world melancholy and mad, and it is not long before he has related at length (because "not impertinent to this discourse" [47]) the second and satirical part of Hippocrates' interview with Democritus. He wholeheartedly sympathizes with Democritus' passion:

> Thus Democritus esteemed of the world in his time, and this [men's madness] was the cause of his laughter: and good cause he had. (52)

No sooner is this said than "a great stentorian Democritus, as big as that Rhodian Colossus" is solicited and in some sense supplied by Democritus Jr., who strives to out-laugh his original. "If Democritus were alive now, he should see...": this formula (parallel with similar constructions

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12. Fish, p. 309.

in Horace and Juvenal)[13] is only grammatically hypothetical. Democritus plainly is alive and laughing in the person of Democritus Jr. The rest of the preface is written by the succenturiator of the laughing Democritus; so is the treatise to follow, in which the laughing Democritus is recombined with his other half, the anatomist of melancholy. "And first of the name of Democritus, lest any man by reason of it should be deceived, expecting a pasquil, a satire": if Burton's deception was not apparent at the opening of the preface, surely it is by the end. Lest there should remain any doubt of the kinship between Democritus Jr. and the laughing Democritus, Burton affirms it in so many words in the short Latin postscript to the preface headed "Lectori Male Feriato" ('To the Reader who employs his leisure ill'). Burton warns his reader against idly censuring his work:

> Nam si talis revera sit, qualem prae se fert Junior Democritus, seniori Democrito saltem affinis, aut ejus genium vel tantillum sapiat, actum de te, censorem aeque ac delatorem aget e contra (petulanti splene cum sit), sufflabit te in jocos, comminuet in sales, addo etiam, et Deo Risui te sacrificabit.
>
> (For, should Democritus Junior prove to be what he professes, even a kinsman of his elder namesake, or be ever so little of the same kidney, it is all up with you: he will become both accuser and judge of you in his petulant spleen, will dissipate you in jests, pulverize you with witticisms, and sacrifice you, I can promise you, to the God of Laughter.) (124)[14]

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13. Juvenal, Satire X, 36: quid si vidisset; Horace, Epist. ii, 1, 194: si foret in terris, rideret Democritus, quoted by Burton (53).

14. I have changed Jackson's translation from "God of Mirth" in accordance with Burton's own translation elsewhere in the Anatomy (I, 340) of Apuleius' Deus Risus.

We have seen that all the reasons Burton gives for his name and all the characters he draws of Democritus (save the last) are in some sense only stations on the way to the discovery of the laughing Democritus. Yet at the same time, every pretended parallel Burton makes between Democritus and himself (whether approved or rejected as grounds for the name) contains at least a partial truth. The author of the Anatomy of Melancholy does lead a collegiate life similar in many respects to the life of Democritus of Abdera; he is attracted to (if also repelled by) the atomic theory and its infinite worlds; he writes a treatise of melancholy in order to cure himself of the disease; his view of the world admits mixed passions; and he does use his mask to gain more freedom of speech. Burton does not abandon any of his partial Democrituses; he accumulates them. They neither exclude each other, nor do they work independently of one another. Most importantly, they are all subsumed by the leading figure of the laughing Democritus. They prove to be aspects of his character, as we shall see.

Beyond its effectiveness in creating a narrative interest out of scant materials, and its building to a rhetorical climax with showman's skill, Burton's cat-and-mouse game with his pseudonym succeeds in establishing a persona which is both complex and integrated around a single idea. There are immediate literary advantages to such complexity. For all the liberty of expression an assumed identity allows an author, the consistency of character a persona requires can also be constraining. The free play of discursive thought is sacrificed to the power of a

particular idea.. The author in his own person has no point of purchase within the narrative. Irony naturally becomes one of the means of rhetorical complication in such circumstances. It enables Erasmus' Folly, for example, to speak both wisely and foolishly in the same character. Swift's several prefaces to A Tale of a Tub, each accounting for the work to follow in a different way, perform a similar function. Burton counters this literary problem by creating in Democritus Jr. a character who is apparently diversely motivated. Though Burton gives "a" reason for the name, he ironically gives to understand several. Although the multiplicity of Democritus Jr.'s persona is more apparent than actual, the appearance alone allows Burton to endow his fiction with something approaching the complexity of human personality. Like the personality according to the model of psychoanalytic theory, Burton's mask is dominated by a single idea, but an idea which has been 'overdetermined'. He gives us not so much several Democritus Jr.'s in the preface as the anatomy of a single Democritus Jr.

The most important, and the most complex aspect of Democritus Jr.'s character concerns the relation between his melancholy and his laughter, between the first and the second parts of the Democritus of the "Epistle to Damagetus" as Burton presents them. How is it, we must ask ourselves, that a character suffering from a disease whose chief symptoms are fear and sorrow, or as we would say, anxiety and depression, can also be one who laughs at the world's

follies, discontents, and cares? The inner dynamic of Burton's persona lies here. Indeed, the entire Anatomy, in its broadest outlines, may be explained with reference to the ideas of melancholy and laughter (and of the relation between them). We must therefore explore them in some detail. When in due course we come to consider the other reasons Burton gives for his name, we shall find that they may be assimilated to a pattern provided by these two concepts.

When Burton finally reveals (or rather, pretends to reveal) "that reason and only respect" for which he has "shrouded himself" under Democritus' name, the parallels he adduces between his own endeavour and Democritus' are indeed striking. Both men write on melancholy; both write to cure the disease in themselves; both write to help others. Or so, on the authority of Hippocrates, Burton claims. In fact, however, Burton has altered certain details of the story of Democritus, as set down by Hippocrates in his letter to Damagetus, in order to strengthen the precedent for his own work and to adapt the story to his own purposes.

The Book of Democritus

According to the pseudo-Hippocratic account, when Hippocrates asks Democritus what he is busy writing, Democritus replies that he is writing περὶ μανίης, "on madness". Burton used a Latin translation of the

works of Hippocrates by Fabius Calvus of Ravenna.[15] Calvus supplies three synonyms for the Greek word manies: "de furore, & insania, maniave... scribo".[16] "The subject of his book was melancholy and madness (20)", says Burton. When he later notes this passage in the margin, Burton cites his source with his customary freedom of quotation: "De furore, mania, melancholia scribo." The subject of Burton's book is indeed melancholy and madness, but not of Democritus', in which melancholy as such has no place.

Burton reports that Democritus was searching for the seat of "this atra bilis, or melancholy." The Greek word is simply χολῆς ; Calvus presents Democritus as "fellis, bilisve naturam & situm disquirens,"[17] i.e. investigating the nature and seat of gall and bile. This bile is presumably yellow bile (choler), not black bile (melancholy). None of the numerous Renaissance or modern translations, vernacular and Latin, that I have consulted, Burton's excepted, names melancholy as the subject of Democritus' book or the object of his anatomical study. The short treatise which Democritus sends to Hippocrates is again simply peri manies (de insania in Calvus' version),

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15. Burton specifically notes this translation in connection with the Hippocratic epistles at III, 269n.

16. Hippocratis Opera, Basel, 1526, p. 482.

17. ibid.

and the symptoms of diseased humanity that he describes at length to Hippocrates in the letter to Damagetus are not those of melancholy in either ancient or Renaissance nosology. They are rather conventional symptoms of moral, not physical madness.

To suppose with Babb that the Anatomy of Melancholy is "just such a book as the Hippocratic Democritus might have written"[18] is to misrepresent both the Hippocratic letters and Burton's Anatomy. In the Hippocratic letters, medical diagnosis frames what remains a wholly moral fable. Democritus' anatomizing of animals represents figuratively his inquisition into the nature of man; man's moral madness is represented by the idea of humoral disorder. The mania of the Abderites bears a strictly metaphoric relation to disease caused by the excess of bile; that is, the resemblance between them is one of things essentially unlike. The conceit of physical madness is therefore not pursued in Democritus' actual harangue to Hippocrates, which deals principally with human cupidity. Burton alters both the literal and figurative meanings of these correspondences between the moral and medical realms. To a precedent which represents the malaise of mankind in terms provided by classical moral and satirical, not medical writings, Burton assimilates a treatise that respects (or makes a show of respecting) the

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18. Babb, Sanity in Bedlam, p. 36.

received medical conceptions of melancholy. He frames a medical treatise in the widest moral and satirical terms, thus reversing the strategy of the Hippocratic letters.

In his frame (the preface) Burton makes explicit the equation of melancholy, madness, and folly. There he defends it as a paradox, for the consensus of medical theory differentiated between melancholy and madness and did not recognize folly in Burton's sense as a physical disease at all. Burton promises to observe the conventional distinctions in his treatise proper, but although he makes pretence of doing so, in fact he confounds them just as he does in the preface and in his account of Democritus' treatise. The melancholy Burton anatomizes in the body of his treatise is still symbolic of man's folly and man's fall. Every case of melancholy, as Rosalie Colie has observed, repeats the original casus in Eden.[19] The relation of particular cases to the general fault of mankind is not, however, metaphoric, but metonymic. It is a relation not of difference but of similarity; of a part to the whole. Every case of disease Burton reports participates in melancholy as well as symbolizes it. The metaphoric relation of bile and madness in the Hippocratic epistles has not only been reversed, but collapsed. Thus both the general condition and the particular discontents of man go by the same name, melancholy, in Burton's

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19. Colie, Paradoxia Epidemica, p. 434.

Anatomy. By modelling Democritus' lost work on his own, as well as his own on Democritus', Burton has made the shroud of his persona a seamless one. By downplaying the differences between his own treatise and the figment of a Cynic fable, however, he has also disguised the degree of his own (colossal) originality.

The Melancholy of Democritus

This change of names and strategies is not the only instance of Burton's departure from his pseudo-Hippocratic source for the life of Democritus. According to Burton, Democritus investigated the nature of melancholy "to the intent he might better cure it in himself." When he later quotes the relevant passage in Latin, Burton omits this sentence, not surprisingly, for it does not occur in the pseudo-Hippocratic account of Democritus. According to Hippocrates, the sole reason for Democritus' preoccupation with the causes of madness is his wish to cure it in others. Burton has modified the story in order to incorporate into his persona the practice of writing on melancholy to relieve the disease in himself. This change has important implications for an understanding of the Anatomy. We must investigate it.

Burton's attribution of madness or melancholy to Democritus would appear to contradict the sense of the Hippocratic letters, for the letters are bent on demonstrating the wisdom of the sage (Democritus) in opposition to the

folly of mankind (the Abderites). It is the Abderites, after all, not Democritus, who are truly mad. We must ask ourselves how and why it comes about that Burton holds, along with numerous other Renaissance writers, that Democritus was a melancholic. In the preface to Saturn and Melancholy, Klibansky and Panofsky note that among themes regrettably omitted from their study, "the legend of Democritus, the melancholy philosopher, whom 'the world's vanity, full of ridiculous contrariety,' moves to laughter, could have been traced from its Hellenistic origins to its memorable appearance in the preface by 'Democritus Jr.' to the Anatomy of Melancholy."[20] A thorough treatment of the legend cannot be attempted here, but some account of it must be given, both for what it may tell us about the pseudo-Hippocratic epistles themselves and about Renaissance (and Burton's) attitudes to Democritus, melancholy, and laughter.

Burton asserts that "Democritus, as he is described by Hippocrates and Laertius, was a little wearish old man, very melancholy by nature," and he specifically notes as his sources Hippocrates' letter to Damagetus and Diogenes Laertius' account of Democritus in Book Nine of his Lives of the Philosophers. Laertius (third century) does furnish considerable information on Democritus, but he does not mention his melancholy (or his laughter). Neither does the letter to Damagetus call Democritus melancholy, and as we

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20. R. Klibansky, E. Panofsky, and F. Saxl, Saturn and Melancholy, London, 1964, v-vi. Democritus' melancholy in the Hippocratic letters is briefly discussed by Hellmut Flashar, Melancholie und Melancholiker in der medizinischen Theorien der Antike, Berlin, 1966, pp. 68-72.

have seen, it emphatically concludes by naming him only wise.[21] Hippocrates encounters Democritus however, in a setting that strongly resembles the haunt of a melancholy man. Democritus lives sequestered from mankind in a garden and meditates under a tree by a running brook. Circumstantial evidence might well suggest that he is melancholy. Of this possibility the author of the pseudo-Hippocratic epistles was well aware, and he seems moreover to have raised it for the purpose of denying it all the more clearly. One letter in the series is devoted to the matter. Before coming to Abdera, and already suspicious of the Abderan diagnosis of Democritus' behaviour, Hippocrates writes to Philopomenes, his host-to-be:

> Democritus is concentrated in himself night and day, living alone, in caves, waste places, in the shade of trees, or in the soft grass or by flowing water. No doubt those who are tormented with melancholy do as much: they are sometimes taciturn, solitary, and seek waste places; they turn aside from men and look upon the faces of their fellows as upon those of strangers. Those who occupy themselves with knowledge, however, also lose interest in other things due to their sole devotion to wisdom ... not just the mad but those who have contempt for human things seek calm and retreat.[22]

Thus Hippocrates explicitly rejects the idea that Democritus is either melancholy or mad. As befits the hero of a Cynic tale, Democritus displays contempt for worldly values. The Abderites call him mad because he seeks solitude and

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21. That is, the long letter to Damagetus, number 17 in the collection. For another letter to Damagetus, see the following paragraph. From the context, Burton appears to have the longer letter in mind when he cites "Epist. Damaget" in the margin.

22. Oeuvres d'Hippocrate, ed. Littré, tom. IX, 331-333; my translation.

because he laughs, but as the letters laboriously demonstrate, the burden of madness properly redounds upon the Abderites themselves.

Once, however, Hippocrates pronounces Democritus melancholy in so many words, although not in vindication of the Abderites. Hippocrates writes to Damagetus before visiting Democritus that Democritus may suffer from melancholy because he laughs at everything (death, murder, sickness) and without remission (without "a mean"). Pretending to address Democritus directly, Hippocrates writes, in Calvus' translation: "Tristis ergo Democrite esto, & atra bile agiteris"[23] ('You are indeed out of countenance, Democritus, and troubled with melancholy'). In his next letter to Damagetus, however, after his interview with Democritus, Hippocrates writes that he has urged the same objections to Democritus' immoderate laughter to the philosopher himself and has come away satisfied with his reply. He reports that he has told the Abderites that, in Burton's own translation, "notwithstanding those small neglects of his attire, body, diet, the world had not a wiser, a more learned, a more honest man, and they were much deceived to say that he was mad." (52) Thus Hippocrates himself overturns his former medical opinion regarding Democritus' melancholy.

Democritus' laughter was known to the Renaissance from

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23. Hippocratis Opera, Basel, 1526, p. 479.

a variety of prominent antique sources both Latin and Greek, but the legend of his melancholy appears to be solely the legacy of the well-known Hippocratic letters, despite their limited warrant for it. Fully five reasons may be advanced to account for Democritus' later representation as a melancholic, some stemming directly from the letters themselves, some from peculiarities of Renaissance interpretation of them.

The first and probably the most important has to do simply with Renaissance habits of mind. However great Democritus' wisdom and pronounced Hippocrates' moralizing upon it, the emblematic suggestion of melancholy inherent in the setting of Democritus' meditations, prevails over them. The tendency to isolate an exemplum or an emblematic detail (in this case, that of the solitary thinker in association with brooks and shades)[24] from its context in a narrative is endemic to the Renaissance. Burton indulges this practice on a vast scale, and, as it happens, cites the case of Democritus' melancholy in his subsection on "Symptoms or Signs in the Mind":

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24. v. for example Henry Peacham's emblem "Melancholia" in Minerva Brittana, London, 1610, p. 126. Peacham's verses comment:

> Heere Melancholly musing in his fits,
> Pale visag'd, of complexion cold and drie,
> All solitarie, at his studie sits,
> Within a wood, devoid of companie.

v. also Roy Strong, "The Elizabethan Malady: Melancholy in Elizabethan and Jacobean Portraiture", Apollo Magazine 79 (1964), 264-69.

> they delight in floods and waters, desert places, to walk alone in orchards, gardens, private walks, back lanes; averse from company, as Diogenes in his tub, or Timon Misanthropus... It was one of the chiefest reasons why the citizens of Abdera suspected Democritus to be melancholy and mad, because that, as Hippocrates related in his epistle to Philopoemen, "he forsook the city, lived in groves and hollow trees, upon a green bank by a brook side, or confluence of waters all day long, and all night." Quae quidem (saith he) plurimum atra bile vexatis et melancholicis eveniunt, deserta frequentant, hominumque congressum aversantur; which is an ordinary thing with melancholy men. The Egyptians therefore in their hieroglyphics expressed a melancholy man by a hare... (396)

Even with the text of Hippocrates' letter to Philopomenes in front of him, Burton is content to cite it as evidence of Democritus' melancholy, naturally stopping his quotation just before the turn in Hippocrates' argument. While it is true that Burton lays the diagnosis to the Abderites, he gives no indication that it ought therefore not to be admitted. Such is the power of an emblematic cliché and the independence of symptom from cause.

Secondly, the importance of Hippocrates' own words, "atra bile agiteris", however they are later revised, must not be underestimated. Not only could they be taken out of context in the series of Hippocratic letters themselves, but Renaissance thinkers supplied a new intellectual context for them. In making Democritus melancholy, Renaissance writers did not necessarily intend to discredit or adversely qualify his wisdom, which they also

recognized. They saw no barrier to adopting both the Abderan and Hippocratic points of view toward Democritus, for they perceived a relation between wisdom and mental disease that the first-century author of the Hippocratic letters did not. The Renaissance conception of noble melancholy, based on the rehabilitation of Aristotle's Problem XXX, I,[25] whereby melancholy was associated with intellectual distinction, made attractive the view that Democritus was both wise and a constitutional melancholic. Marsilio Ficino[26] (who was chiefly responsible for Renaissance interest in Problem XXX, I), Philip Melancthon,[27] and Burton[28] all connect Democritus' wisdom with Aristotelian melancholy.

A third reason for the melancholy of Democritus construes the relation between his wisdom and his melancholy another way, one which was, perhaps surprisingly, anticipated in the Hippocratic letters themselves. Paradoxically, insight

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25. The Problem is printed, translated, and thoroughly discussed by Klibansky et al., pp. 15-74.

26. Ficino, Opera Omnia, Basel, 1576 (reprinted, Torino, 1962), I, 286-287,

27. Melancthon, De Anima, Basel, 1543, p. 539. v. infra p. 213.

28. Burton, Anatomy, I, 392 (following on a reference to Durer's engraving "Melencolia I"). At I, 401, Burton appears to be quoting Melancthon in his mention of Democritus' hilare delirium. Burton's references to the Aristotelian character of Democritus' melancholy are made in an off-hand manner among many other and various cases of melancholy symptoms.

into the truth of human affairs brings to Democritus not philosophic contentment, but a state of mind bordering on distraction. Democritus has seen through the illusions that motivate the Abderites, but his perceptions threaten to render human life, and the truth about it, meaningless. Consider this passage from a letter to Hippocrates from the Senate of Abdera:

> Forgetful of everything and first of all of himself, he remains awake night and day, laughing at everything great and small, and thinking that the whole of life is nothing. One marries, another trades, this one advises, those command, go on embassies, are set to tasks, are taken off them, fall sick, are wounded, die; he laughs at all, seeing some men downcast and others full of joy. He even troubles himself to know what passes in hell, and he writes about it; he says the air is full of images, he hears the cries of birds, and rising in the night appears to sing softly to himself; at other times he relates that he voyages in infinite space and that there are innumerable Democrituses like himself. And his colour is changed no less than his thoughts.[29]

Like the Preacher, Democritus has understood that "the whole of life is nothing". The Abderan diagnosis in this letter is to the point, even if their appeal to Hippocrates is not: Democritus "has become mad on account of his great wisdom"; now he is "in danger of succumbing to paralysis of the understanding and to stupidity."[30] Democritus is susceptible both to sense impressions and to ideas that others cannot receive. In place of the reassuring finitude of a localized self, he imagines himself endlessly replicated in

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29. Oeuvres d'Hippocrate, ed. Littré, IX, 321-323; my translation.

30. ibid, p. 325.

space, in a nightmarish transformation of the infinite worlds of his atomic theory. Democritus' interest in the affairs of hell and his cosmic voyaging take him outside the bounds of worldly illusion to realms later explored by Lucian (probably in imitation of Menippus). Democritus' laughter is of course recognizable as that of the Menippean Cynic hero. In this particular passage, however, these themes are not employed for their satiric value. This description of Democritus goes beyond Cynic belittlement of man's imagined self-importance in the cosmos toward a representation of the mental alienation that such a realization induces: "forgetful of everything and first of all of himself."

The pattern of this alienation cannot fail to suggest certain aspects of Renaissance melancholia. The brooding angel of Durer's "Melencolia I", for example, in the grip of interior visions amidst the abandoned apparatus of measurement and creation, expresses a similar combination of insight and incapability, if also much more.[31] The melancholy of self-awareness, occasioned by intellectual penetration of the world's illusions and constraints, coupled with mortal bondage to them, to which Hamlet and Democritus Jr. are subject, is foreshadowed in the description of Democritus by the senate of Abdera. Only Burton explored this state of mind in connection with Democritus,

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31. Klibansky et al., pp. 284ff.

however, and even he transformed it by means of Democritus' own laughter. By making Democritus melancholy, Renaissance writers did not so much distort as enhance his condition as the Hippocratic letters represent it, at least with respect to the particulars of his distraction.

Although Democritus' laughter did not preclude his melancholy, and had at first been taken as proof of it by Hippocrates, continual hilarity did not sort well with the later development of melancholy as a condition sometimes represented by Renaissance authors as generative of tragic or ennobling sorrow. Only in Hippocrates' single reference and in association with other proto-melancholic symptoms in the letter from the senate of Abdera does Democritus' laughter appear in the Hippocratic letters as a sign of mental alienation rather than wisdom. Later literary development of a melancholy, non-laughing Democritus, with the conditional exception of Burton's treatment, is not to be found. Two pictorial representations of such a Democritus (though far outnumbered by those of him as the laughing philosopher) are therefore of particular interest.

The most familiar to readers of Burton's Anatomy is of course that of the frontispiece to the book (1628), by Christian Le Blon.[32] It shows "Democritus Abderites" in

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32. Le Blon's frontispiece is described and briefly discussed by W.R. Mueller, "Robert Burton's Frontispiece", Publications of the Modern Language Association 64 (1949), 1074-88. Mueller suggests that either Burton provided instructions to Le Blon or Le Blon had a detailed knowledge of the Anatomy.

his garden in the pose, head on hand, that Durer's engraving had made popular for representations of melancholy. The astrological symbol for "Saturn, Lord of Melancholy", as a line of Burton's poetic "Argument of the Frontispiece" names it, is placed above him. The placing of hand on head in Le Blon's picture and the expression on Democritus' face suggest distraction more than studious or musing contemplation. Democritus' thoughts have led him away from his task of anatomy, and his pen is not employed in filling the pages that lie open on his knees. By contrast, two Dutch depictions of the Hippocratic Democritus, directly inspired by the "Epistle to Damagetus", show him busy writing and apparently free from melancholy.[33] Although Le Blon's Democritus is clearly afflicted by melancholy, the precise nature of his condition cannot be discerned from the engraving, nor do Burton's doggerel verses illuminate it.

Salvator Rosa's "Democritus in Meditation" is a far more ambitious picture than Le Blon's. It is a vanitas of particular gloominess and force. The Democritus it portrays is engaged neither in anatomy nor in writing, but in deep reflection. He sits in a place of desolation amidst images of death and decay. His head is buried

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33. W. Stechow "Zwei Darstellungen aus Hippokrates in der Holländischen Malerei" Oudheidkundig Jaarboek 4 (1924), 34-38, reproduces pictures by Moeyart and Van Berchem. Two other depictions of the scene of Hippocrates' visit, by J. Lievens and J. Backer, are also known. See Robert Oertel, "Die Vergänglichkeit der Künste: Ein Vanitas-Stilleben von Salvator Rosa", Munchener Jahrbuch Der Bildenden Kunst 14 (1963), 105-120, p. 120n.

in his hand as well as supported by it. He is overcome by thoughts of mortality and finitude. Domenico Feti and G.B. Castiglione had already combined the pictorial traditions of *vanitas* and melancholy before him, but Rosa was the first, in 1650, to make Democritus the contemplating figure in such a picture. It has most recently been suggested that Rosa's Democritus does not derive from the Hippocratic letters at all, but rather represents a witty Baroque twisting of the laughing philosopher into the posture traditional for the weeping Heraclitus.[34] Certain details in the picture suggest, however, that this is not so, although obviously no direct depiction of the Hippocratic story is intended. Democritus' manuscript book, for example, rests upon his knee, though it is closed firmly shut by his hand. Democritus is surrounded by the bones and corpses of numerous animals, among which lies a human skull; his anatomies have been transformed into the offal of mortality. His garden has become crowded with ruins, and the shady tree under which he sits in the Hippocratic letters is now gnarled and blasted. A motto inset into Rosa's engraving of his picture explains the meaning of these transformations:

> Democritus omnium derisor
> in omnium fine defigitur.
>
> (Democritus the mocker of all things
> is consumed by the ending of all things.)

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34. See Richard W. Wallace, "Salvator Rosa's *Democritus and L'Umana Fragilità*", *Art Bulletin* 50 (1968), 21-32, esp. p. 25. Several scholars had previously suggested the Hippocratic letters as Rosa's source, but they did not attempt to interpret the picture in terms of them. Both Oertel and Wallace deny that *vanitas* has any place in the Hippocratic story of Democritus, but only by the narrowest understanding of the idea can this be so.

Rosa's Democritus is disabled by his vision of vanitas, for he understands that the vanity of all things is also his own and that of his very laughter. Rosa has revealed another side of the philosopher who in the Hippocratic letters laughs because "the whole of life is nothing". Rosa's insight, however, draws out implications which are present in the letters themselves.

Fourth in our consideration of Democritus' melancholy, an 'Abderan' interpretation of Democritus' unconventional behaviour is not as unthinkable as Hippocrates and his creator make out. The representation of the sage in moral philosophy, and above all in satire, is always potentially problematic. Insofar as the sage is not one of the gods, the limits of his wisdom or of his very existence may manifest themselves in some form of folly or disease.[35] In the Hippocratic epistles, as we have seen, Democritus is likened to a god and is said to be possessed by wisdom. Even if he is granted a godlike vision of the truth, however, his knowledge, as Rosa's picture suggests, is ultimately

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35. v., for example, Horace, Ep. I, 1, 106-108:
Ad summam: sapiens uno minor est Iove, dives, liber, honoratus, pulcher, rex denique regum, praecipue sanus, nisi cum pituita molesta.

(To sum up: the wise man is less than Jove alone. He is rich, free, honoured, beautiful, nay a king of kings; above all, sound - save when troubled by the "flu"!) Trans. H. Fairclough, Loeb Horace. Burton quotes the last line of this passage (118).

irreconcilable with his own mortality and bears no creative relationship to human life. Democritus may be wiser than the Abderites, but he is not absolutely wise. To put it another way, the Abderites are foolish, but Democritus is only somewhat less foolish. Indeed, from the point of view of an absolute (if also unattainable or impracticable) wisdom, there is no difference between them. This levelling of the relative distinctions between degrees of folly (or of any of the manifestations of insania, i.e. 'unsoundness' of body or mind) was formulated by the Stoics in their paradoxes, especially in the fourth of those listed by Cicero. This paradox, 'that all fools are mad' is the idea around which the satirical argument of Burton's preface is constructed. It is natural therefore that in his preface Burton should represent Democritus as a fool (and as mad and melancholy) along with everybody else.

Following Erasmus, Burton wishes for "a Democritus to laugh at Democritus, one jester to flout at another, one fool to fleer at another (52)", thereby conjuring up an infinite regression of laughing Democrituses or a Democritus that carries about with him (or within him) a double to ape at him, like a court fool's bauble. These are the shapes that wisdom must take when it descends into the world. Bakhtin has observed the frequent presence in Menippean works of parodical doubles one of which "discrowns" the other[36] (or each of which discrowns the other, like Tweedledee

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36. Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, pp. 104-105.

and Tweedledum). The discrowning of the discrowner is the keystone case of this phenomenon. Burton again:

> Democritus, that common flouter of folly, was ridiculous himself, barking Menippus, scoffing Lucian, satirical Lucilius, Petronius, Varro, Persius, etc., may be censured with the rest. (111)

"The rest" of course include Democritus Jr., as Burton is well aware. Given that Democritus (or any laughing satirist) may be laughed at in his turn, the satirist's conceit of his own superiority in laughing at the follies of others becomes his own mad and ridiculous humour, just as going to law and digging mines are the humours of the Abderites or buying old statues that of Horace's Damasippus. The laughter becomes another fool, albeit one whose particular eccentricity may express a just reflection on the follies of others (and on his own).

If the generic tendency of Menippean satire to inclusiveness leads it to challenge itself from within and to expose the philosophic limits of its own mockery, various forms of Elizabethan and Jacobean literature, especially drama, furnish similar perceptions in the psychological and social realms. Alvin Kernan and others[37] have shown how English writers of this period, first in the persona of verse satire and then on the stage, represented the satirist as a particular social or psychological type, usually as the malcontent or the melancholic (often considered one and the same). Satire was portrayed as the spite of the social

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37. Alvin Kernan, The Cankered Muse, New Haven, 1959, esp. pp. 142-43. See also Babb, The Elizabethan Malady, chap. 4.

outcast or as the product of a morbid imagination. As such it might or might not express truths about man and society. The effect of this rotation of perspective was to direct attention toward the sources and limitations of satire as much as to its objects. In presenting Democritus Jr. as a melancholic, Burton may have been following examples of the melancholy satirist such as Shakespeare's Jacques, Jonson's Macilente (Every Man Out of His Humour), and Marston's Lampatho Doria (What You Will). Burton was well-acquainted with Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, particularly from the period (the first decade of the 1600's) when he was himself engaged in playwriting.[38]

Fifth and finally, although Diogenes Laertius does not call Democritus melancholy (and appears to be wholly ignorant of the Hippocratic letters), his account of Heraclitus, the weeping philosopher, may have affected Renaissance thinking about Heraclitus' legendary counterpart, the laughing Democritus. In his life of Heraclitus, Laertius reports Heraclitus to have been melancholy, on the authority of Theophrastus. The obscurity and incoherence of his writings are cited as evidence of his condition. Heraclitus' apocryphal tears were apparently unknown to Laertius, but it was perhaps inevitable that Theophrastus' attribution of melancholy to him should be connected with his weeping by Renaissance writers.

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38. Burton had written his Latin comedy Philosophaster by 1608 and had collaborated on the pastoral romance Alba in 1605.

The laughter of Democritus and the tears of Heraclitus were also frequently connected, as they had been in antiquity. Symmetry beckoned for a melancholy Democritus to match the melancholy Heraclitus, and a laughing delirium was opposed to a doleful one.[39] A scientific treatise by Giacomo Ferrari bears the title Democrito et Heraclito. Dialoghi Del Riso, Delle Lagrime, Della Melancolia.[40] Whether justifiably or not, Democritus and Heraclitus became the patron philosophers of these three subjects, all of interest to Renaissance physicians.

In summary, Burton and his fellow writers of the Renaissance made Democritus out to be melancholy in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons, all ultimately stemming from a common source, the Hippocratic letters. No single picture of Democritus' melancholy dominated or excluded the others, and undoubtedly the several views we have surveyed were more conclusive in concert, even if not wholly consistent among themselves.

Of all the Renaissance authors to treat it, Burton writes with the deepest feeling for the complexities of Democritus' melancholy. His feeling is no doubt based on subjective rather than purely scholarly insight. His actual description of Democritus' melancholy, apart from scattered references in the Anatomy's partitions, is brief

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39. See Laurent Joubert, Traité du Ris, Paris, 1579, p. 274. Hippocrates' words in the first letter to Damagetus would of course support such a characterization.

40. Mantova, 1627.

to the point of enigma. In the preface, Burton says no more than that Democritus was "very melancholy by nature" (16). In "Symptoms or Signs in the Mind", following Melancthon, Burton identifies Democritus' melancholy as sanguine, i.e. as tempered with blood (I, 401). A detail buried in a subsection, however, is of no importance as far as Burton's presentation of his persona itself is concerned. In the preface, no species is specified for Democritus' melancholy is as unconfined as his laughter, and if Burton's vagueness has a particular point, this is it.

Democritus Jr.'s description of his own affliction in his defence of his subject is oblique and jocular rather than clinical or theoretical, but what he does reveal about the nature and extent of his melancholy is of interest.

> Concerning myself, I can peradventure affirm with Marius in Sallust, "That which others hear or read of, I felt and practiced myself; they get their knowledge by books, I mine by melancholizing." Experto crede Roberto. Something I can speak out of experience... I would help others out of a fellow-feeling. (22)

While there is more than a tincture of irony in this assertion, itself borrowed from another author and made by Burton on behalf of what is perhaps the most staggeringly bookish book ever written, there is also a generous measure of truth in it. Only an author whose melancholy was not merely sanguine (as has been suggested)[41] but in some sense universal could claim to have "melancholized" the Anatomy

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41. Babb, Sanity in Bedlam, p.35.

of Melancholy. No paradox is necessary to sustain Burton's boast. The well-known sentence from Terence, "homo sum: nihil humani a me alienum puto," was a fundamental assumption of humanism.[42] Burton, like Pope, may claim to "feel for all mankind". As I have already noted, the individual, be he the reader or Democritus Jr. himself, serves Burton as he had Montaigne, as an exemplum of all humanity. Furthermore, as Burton repeatedly affirms, the basic experience of melancholy is everywhere the same: "there is in all melancholy similitudo dissimilis, like men's faces, a disagreeing likeness still" (I, 397). The diseases of melancholy epitomizes the human condition. To experience it in any form is to experience the essence of all forms. We may of course still wonder at the ability of a solitary scholar to project his own experience onto the diverse shapes that humanity takes in his pages. We may feel too where the pressure of Burton's own experience is the strongest, and we may guess at the biographical origins of his melancholy.[43] Yet we must also recognize

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42. Burton himself quotes this sentence elliptically at the conclusion to his survey of the symptoms of love: "yet homo sum, etc., not altogether inexpert in this subject. (III, 184)"

43. The only attempt to trace the origin of Burton's melancholy that does not arise from the hints Burton gives in the Anatomy itself is the recent article by Barbara Traister, "New Evidence About Burton's Melancholy?", Renaissance Quarterly 29 (1976), 66-70 which proposes that the "Robart Burton" who visited the London physician Simon Forman in 1597 for a complaint that was diagnosed as melancholy was the future anatomist of melancholy.

that the melancholy which Democritus Jr. anatomizes is always his own, just as it is at the same time always his reader's and mankind's at large. Democritus Jr.'s melancholy is a universal disease in its universal aspect.

Insofar as Burton assumes Democritus' mask on account of his predecessor's melancholy, he does so, as he tells us, simply as one who desires with Democritus "to cure the disease in himself." Although this element of auto-therapy, added by Burton to the Hippocratic story as he found it, creates certain complications in Democritus Jr.'s melancholy, the essential problem of his character proceeds from the combination of his melancholy with his laughter. We have already looked askance at Democritus' laughter from the side of his melancholy. Now we must reverse our perspective and approach Democritus' character, and that of his Jacobean son and heir, from the point of view of laughter.

The Laughter of Democritus

We are told even less in direct terms about Burton's adoption of Democritus' laughter than of his melancholy. Only in the Latin postscript to the preface is the kinship between Democritus père et fils openly acknowledged in this respect. Burton depends on our inferring the consubstantiality of their laughter from the satirical content of the preface itself, written as it is from the vantage of Democritus "were [he] alive now." A brief survey of Renaissance and antique views of Democritus as the laughing

philosopher and of Burton's own sources for the figure may help us to understand the use Burton made of him in fashioning Democritus Jr.

As with Democritus' melancholy, we are faced with various Renaissance interpretations of his laughter, arising from differences in the ancient sources and the different ends to which Renaissance writers put them. Burton took over the laughing Democritus directly from a number of classical texts, but used him in ways that earlier Renaissance writers had already explored and with which he was also familiar. In Juvenal, Horace, Seneca, Lucian, and the Greek Anthology, Democritus is invoked as a stock type of the ridiculer of human folly.[44] He only appears as an actual character in Lucian (and then only in the passage quoted below)[45] and of course in the Hippocratic letters. He is only one among several ancient representatives of this type, whose origin, as I have suggested, is Plato's Socrates, in particular as praised by Alcibiades in his speech in the Symposium. There Socrates is the wise teacher whose whole life is spent in "mocking and flouting" at mankind. In Lucian's dialogues, the role of the laugher is given chiefly to Menippus, but also to a number of his fellow Cynics. The Democritus of the Hippocratic letters represents the most elaborate development in antiquity of the philosopher

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44. Juvenal, Satires X, 28-52; Horace, Epistles I, i, 194-98; Seneca, De Ira 2, 10, 5 and De Tranquillitate Animi 15, 1-6; Lucian, Works (Loeb), II, 473, and III, 171; Greek Anthology, III, 9, 148. All but Horace pair Democritus with Heraclitus. Other minor references to Democritus' laughter, by Cicero, Aelian, and others, do not mention Heraclitus.

45. infra, p. 232.

as "flouter of folly". Democritus' laughter in the classical sources is primarily, if not solely that of the satirical observer from whom Burton first dissociates himself and whom he later champions and imitates. Such too is Democritus' laughter in countless allusions by Renaissance writers, including Erasmus on several occasions in the Praise of Folly. Some writers pointedly distinguish Democritus' laughter from more open, heartier kinds as expressive only of derision. In a discussion of the affections of the soul, Juan Luis Vives refers to it as "irrisus non risus" ('mockery, not laughter').[46] When, in his introduction to Hippocrates' account of Democritus, Burton refers to Democritus' laughter as an "ironical passion (47)", he means that it is full of scoffing and mockery.[47]

Democritus' fame as a philosopher and the particulars of his philosophy also coloured some ancient and Renaissance conceptions of his laughter. Seneca, for example, preferred Democritus' laughter to the tears of Heraclitus because:

> elevanda ergo omnia et facili animo ferenda: humanius est deridere vitam quam deplorare.[48]
>
> (all things should be made light of and borne with an easy mind: it is more human to mock at life than to mourn for it.)

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46. Vives, De Anima, Basel, 1543, p. 284.

47. Norman Knox, The Word 'Irony' and Its Context 1500-1755, Durham, N.C., 1961, p. 98.

48. Seneca, De Tranquillitate Animi XV, 2; my translation.

Montaigne dilates upon this idea in his essay "De Democritus et Heraclitus" without direct reference to Seneca but with probable reminiscence of him. Comparing the two philosophers, he says:

> J'ayme mieux la premiere humeur [Democritus'], non par ce qu'il est plus plaisant de rire que de pleurer, mais parce qu'elle est plus desdaigneuse, et qu'elle nous condamne plus que l'autre; et il me semble que nous ne pouvons jamais estre assez mesprisez selon nostre merite. La plainte et la commiseration sont meslées à qualque estimation de la chose qu'on plaint; les choses dequoy on se moque, on les estime sans pris. Je ne pense point qu'il y ait tant de malheur en nous comme il y a de vanité, ny tant de malice comme de sotise: nouse ne sommes si pleins de mal comme d'inanité; nous ne sommes pas si miserables comme nous sommes viles.[49]

Unlike weeping, laughter was a passion acceptable to those of Stoic temperament like Seneca and Montaigne, as it had been to Cynics from the time of Diogenes and Crates. It signified not so much contempt of the particular follies of men as recognition of the vanity of human life.

This was not the only possible philosophic application of Democritus' laughter. Diogenes Laertius had described Democritus' ethical ideal as euthymia, i.e. 'cheerfulness', 'well-being', or 'constancy of the soul'. In addition he recorded among Democritus' works a treatise devoted to the subject.[50] Renaissance scholars connected this ideal of

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49. Montaigne, Essais, I, L, ed.cit., p.291.

50. Seneca also referred to this treatise in De Tranquillitate Animi 2, 3: hanc stabilem animi sedem Graeci euthymian vocant, de qua Democriti volumen egregium est, ego tranquillitatem voco.

mental composure with Democritus' laughter.[51] Laertius had explicitly warned against taking euthymia as 'pleasure', but Ficino, the foremost Renaissance exponent of voluptas, did just that, understanding by it Epicurean tranquillity of mind. Melanchthon's reference to Democritus' melancholy in De Anima compresses several aspects of Democritus' supposed character, including this one:

> quale aiunt fuisse delirium Democriti hilarius, qui ridere solebat hominum stulticiam, eaque animi tranquillitate vitam produxit usque ad annum centesimum nonum suae aetatis.[52]
>
> (such the cheerful madness of Democritus is said to have been, who used to laugh at the foolishness of mankind and by his unruffled mind prolonged his life to the hundred-and-ninth year.)

It may well be that Dr. Johnson intends a precise allusion to Democritus' philosophy in his invocation of him in The Vanity of Human Wishes:

> Once more, Democritus, arise on earth,
> With chearful wisdom and instructive mirth.[53]

Johnson's model Juvenal refers only to "perpetual laughter".

Yet another interpretation of Democritus' laughter arises out of the previous three and from Renaissance theories about the nature of laughter itself. Both medical and satirical writers granted to laughter in general

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51. Some modern scholars too have supposed it the origin of the legend of Democritus' laughter, for example, Cora Lutz, "Democritus and Heraclitus", Classical Journal 49 (1954), pp. 309-313. Z Stewart, op.cit., has, however, challenged this idea.

52. Cited by Klibansky et al. p. 90. I give their translation, p. 89.

53. ll. 49-50 in Poems, ed. E.L. McAdam, Jr., New Haven, 1964.

and to Democritus' laughter in particular the power to cure the mind of grief and cares. One of the liminary poems to Pierre de la Besse's Le Democrite Chretien (1615), which Burton owned in Latin translation, prefers to Heraclitus "un Democrite/ Changeant en ioyes nos douleurs".[54] Rabelais, who was called a Democritus in commendatory verses prefixed to Pantagruel[55] and who was himself a physician, lays the highest value on the alaigresse of his books and claims their effectiveness in curing ills of body and mind.[56] Laurent Joubert's Traité du Ris (1560), devotes a chapter to the value of laughter in procuring health.[57] Appended to the 1579 edition of Joubert's treatise is a French translation of the "Epistle to Damagetus". Bakhtin has suggested that both Rabelais' and Joubert's interest in the therapeutic properties of laughter reflects study of the subject at the medical school of Montpellier, where both men taught.[58] Let us recall that the Hippocratic letters formed part of the corpus of the most prestigious of

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54. Cited by E. Wind, "The Christian Democritus", Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 1 (1938), 180-182.

55. Pantagruel, ed. V.L. Saulnier, Geneva, 1965, p. 3.

56. v. esp. Le Quart Livre, ed. R. Marichal, Geneva, 1947, "Epître Liminaire".

57. Joubert, op.cit., pp. 330-331.

58. Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, p. 68.

ancient physicians and were not generally considered spurious even in Burton's day. The Hippocratic letters themselves suggest a medical application of Democritus' laughter, as we shall presently see.

In England, laughter, often identified as Democritus', was sometimes specifically directed to the cure of melancholy. Robert Greene's Arbasto, The Anatomy of Fortune (1584) advertised itself as a book "Wherein Gentlemen may finde pleasaunte conceytes to purge Melancholy".[59] Books of jests, poems, and ballads also promised to expel the humour, as the title of one of them, Pills to Purge Melancholy (1599), often repeated in later collections, announces.[60] Another, Samuel Rowlands' Democritus, or Doctor Merry-man His Medicines, Against Melancholy humours (1607) explains itself by its title. It was owned by Burton. Yet another, Tyros Roring-Megge, Planted against the walls of Melancholy (1598), also owned by Burton, is of particular interest. The author of this collection of satirical epigrams and characters ("N.T. Tyro", probably a Cambridge undergraduate) claims, "I was altogether terrestriall, or rather melancholicke... Resolved to be the grater that should chase the sad humour to crums, I became Sub-sizar to Democritus, being well content to be

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59. Cited by Sir William Osler, "Robert Burton: The Man, His Book, His Library", Oxford Bibliographical Society Proceedings and Papers, I (1922-26), p. 191.

60. v. Cyrus Day, "Pills to Purge Melancholy", Review of English Studies 8 (1932), 177-184.

no longer mal-content".[61] Here laughter purges the melancholy of the writer as well as that of the reader. It is doubtful that this passage was the inspiration of Burton's Anatomy, but the relation it describes between a melancholy man and the laughing Democritus he emulates is pertinent to Burton's own decision to become succenturiator Democriti, as we shall see.

All of these conceptions of Democritus' laughter are reflected in Burton's Anatomy. Neither in Burton nor in earlier writers is it always possible, however, to separate mockery, philosophy, and therapy from each other as we have done for the sake of explanation. They tend to be combined as Democritus' laughter is represented as universal, i.e. as it is directed against the whole life of man. Universality is the salient character of all Menippean laughter, in which the several elements of Democritus' laughter I have mentioned are perhaps always implicit. Democritus himself joins them in these words addressed to Hippocrates:

> When you know the cause of my laughter... you will bear away with you, with my laugh, a better medicine than your embassy itself could bring and will be able to give wisdom to others.[62]

Properly speaking, this medicine is the medicine of philosophy, not of mockery or mirth, specifically of the Cynic philosophy of self-knowledge and self-possession.

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61. Cited by Osler, op.cit., p. 190. See also B. Lyons, Voices of Melancholy, pp. 122-123.

62. Oeuvres d'Hippocrate, ed. Littré, IX, 359; my translation.

Although this philosophy is enunciated in technical language in the letter to Damagetus, it is also contained in Democritus' laughter itself, as Democritus suggests. His laughter is not merely the affective expression of a philosophy, however. It contains philosophy, but philosophy cannot contain it. Mockery, irony, health, cheerfulness and even merriment, as well as the lofty ideal of mental tranquillity, are all borne by it, in the Hippocratic epistles and in its other manifestations in classical and Renaissance literature.

No single-minded interpretation of Democritus' laughter will suffice to explain it, for it is inherently two-sided and open-ended. One of its faces derides man and makes sport of his vanity. The other face recreates man's mind and body, dispelling sorrow and procuring well-being. These two faces are not opposed, but look like Janus' outward from a common centre, from the act of laughter itself. Neither face laughs without the other's laughing also.[63]

Thus Democritus must suffer his own mockery (or acknowledge that he is not above it) before he can cheerfully compose his mind. For those whom he mocks, his laughter may become a medicine if they will swallow it and laugh at themselves. Neither for Democritus nor for the Abderites, however, can laughter be an "absolute cure".

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63. Laughter and its ambivalence are discussed by Bakhtin in Rabelais and His World, esp. chap. 2. Democritus' laughter is briefly treated on pp. 67-68 and 360-61.

Cure implies a uniform and settled state of mortal being, whereas laughter is indissolubly two-sided and outside of time. Like the laughter of the Homeric gods at the hobbling Vulcan in the Iliad (I, 599), Menippean laughter is "unquenchable". Man may resonate this laughter, but he cannot possess it; it rather possesses him (as the Abderites say of Democritus' wisdom). Only absolute laughter can wholly contain its own ambivalence within itself; its human vessels must act out this ambivalence on the stage of the world. Even as he laughs at "the world's vanity, full of ridiculous contrariety (49)", the laugher himself is vain and liable to ridiculous self-contradiction. Democritus' mind is not as "unruffled" as Melancthon claims. Thoughts of infinity and mortality, of the limits to human consciousness, forestall perfect composure indefinitely. The Hippocratic Democritus recognizes this circumstance, which is why his laughter bears the character of distraction. He is unable wholly to transcend his own ridiculousness. Democritus' consciousness contains its own negation (laughter at itself). His consciousness is "full" (for nothing escapes it), but also void of real (non-illusory) content; it is plein d'inanité, 'full of emptiness', in Montaigne's oxymoron. Democritus' laughter comprehends the entire world, including himself: as nothing. The human equivalent of absolute laughter is thus self-knowledge, where such knowledge includes awareness of the self's inability to determine itself absolutely. Democritus' laughter is thus an "ironical passion" in the Socratic sense (similarly, Socrates' irony involves, in Alcibiades' grotesque image

of it, his "mocking and flouting" at mankind). Democritus' laughter triumphantly derides what is philosophically insubstantial in human life, but his triumph, like Socrates', is purchased at the price of a wisdom conscious that it is without definite, substantial content.

Melancholy and Laughter

In the Hippocratic letters, insofar as melancholy or a condition suggestive of it is present at all or may be distinguished from Democritus' other traits of character, it grows out of the same perceptions that occasion his laughter. The metaphysics of his melancholy and his laughter are the same, whatever the affective expression of each. Laughing or melancholy, Democritus perceives and in a sense embodies the contradiction between supra-human truths (i.e. human limits) and the activity of human life. Whether Democritus' recognition of his own finitude and temporality finds expression in melancholy self-awareness or laughing self-knowledge, or in some combination, successive or simultaneous, of hilarity and delirium, his consciousness contains the same contraries.

These contraries were also present to the consciousness of certain painters, writers, and gentlemen of the Renaissance, who described them, and cultivated them, as melancholy and humour. Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl have lucidly delineated how, given the similar metaphysics of

their conditions, the melancholic and the humorist (whom I have been calling the laugher) may nevertheless be differentiated. Of the "consciously cultivated" melancholy and humour that became fashionable in Europe in the sixteenth century they write:

> The melancholic primarily suffers from the contradiction between time and infinity, while at the same time giving a positive value to his own sorrow "sub specie aeternitatis", since he feels that through his very melancholy he has a share in eternity. The humorist, however, is primarily amused by the same contradiction, while at the same time deprecating his own amusement "sub specie aeternitatis" since he recognizes that he himself is fettered once and for all to the temporal. Hence it can be understood how in modern man "Humour", with its sense of the limitation of the Self, developed alongside that Melancholy which had become a feeling of an enhanced self.[64]

It should be pointed out that not all melancholy was cultivated in relation to the infinite and eternal; the authors of Saturn and Melancholy have provided an intellectual model for conditions that perhaps rarely attained such metaphysical purity. The concepts they discuss are elusive, and their analysis itself depends on the interpretation of literature and painting. Nevertheless, their model of melancholy and humour does theoretically isolate each from the other.

The consciousness of both melancholic and humorist is at once transcendent and limited; the melancholic chooses imaginatively to dwell with the infinite and eternal, the

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64. Klibansky et al., pp. 234-35.

humorist with the temporal and finite. Cultivated sympathy with a sense of transcendence or limit, however, cannot suppress the other term of the contradictions present in both humours. The melancholic's self-enφhancement, for example, finds its most sublime expression in a state of contemplative ecstasy in which the self is all but abandoned. The absorption of the melancholic's consciousness by the objects of his contemplation is made possible by the withdrawal of the ego from its natural seat in the finite self. The price of the self's imaginative enhancement can be physical powerlessness and an acute awareness of its worldly limits, as Durer shows. To the fashionable melancholic still in control of his melancholy, these contradictions might seem "bittersweet" or "poetic"; to the melancholic malgré lui, to the morbid melancholic, the bitterness and the sweetness might cease to mingle in a single emotion and instead could divide the self emotionally against itself. Such is the picture of the melancholic's vicissitudes of mood presented in "The Author's Abstract of Melancholy", the liminary poem which Burton added to the Anatomy in 1628.

The humorist's cultivated feeling for the self's limits also has another side. There is in his amusement at the metaphysical contradictions of human life what Coleridge describes with reference to what constitutes "genuine humour" as "an acknowledgement of the hollowness and farce of the world, and its disproportion to the godlike

within us."[65] Sympathy with the temporal and finite involves identification of the self as a bit player in a single performance of a worldly farce. The humorist risks becoming a mere cynic or succumbing to the black despair of melancholy.

As the authors of Saturn and Melancholy note, it was possible to be humorous about one's melancholy or melancholy about one's humour.[66] Each condition could evoke the other and by a single rotation of feeling, produce it. Modern sensibility takes for granted the mingling of these moods and humours, but in early seventeenth-century England their interpenetration and attendant paradoxes could still be felt with the force of discovery. That the Democritus of the Hippocratic letters came to be known both for his melancholy and for his laughter tells us as much about Renaissance attitudes to these subjects as about the letters themselves. Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl suggest that, in referring to Democritus' hilare delirium in his discussion of famous melancholics, Melancthon "anticipated the romantic type of melancholy humorist".[67] It is probably more accurate to say that the melancholy humorist was anticipated in the Hippocratic letters and first realized by Burton in Democritus Jr. Through Burton's

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65. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Miscellaneous Criticism, ed. Thomas Raysor, Oxford, 1936, p. 444.

66. Klibansky et al., p. 235.

67. ibid., p. 89.

admirer Sterne it became a romantic type, whence it has perhaps become a modern cliché.

Rather than inquire how Democritus Jr. can be at once a melancholy and a laughing anatomist, we might better ask how it could be otherwise. Burton's presentation of Democritus Jr. itself provokes the question, for instead of taking Democritus melancholy and laughing from the Hippocratic letters as he had found him, Burton chose to treat these two aspects of his predecessor's character separately in his preface. Although obviously aware of their congruity, Burton preferred to split them apart: why?

Beyond the simple coincidence of their conditions and occupations, there is no real reason for Burton to assume the mask of a melancholy anatomist from Democritus of Abdera. Burton was not interested in concealing his identity in the Anatomy but rather in constructing it to his advantage. Literature is equipment for living: it is a strategic encounter with experience, not just a passive reflection of it.[68] The narrator of the Anatomy of Melancholy says of himself that he was "fatally driven upon this rock of melancholy (35)", that he "had gravidum cor, foedum caput, a kind of imposthume in my head (21)", and that he turned to writing to ease his mind. Burton

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68. v. Kenneth Burke, "Literature as Equipment for Living" in Perspectives by Incongruity, ed. S.E. Hyman, Bloomington, 1964, pp. 100-109.

conceives of himself, creates himself in his book as a man - as a mask - who triumphs (however provisionally) over melancholic depression. Like the melancholy student of Tyros Roring Megge, he "chases the sad humour to crumbs" by taking upon himself the character not of the melancholy but of the laughing Democritus. In the world of real time and space, such a triumph can only be momentary, if indeed it can be isolated at all, for the reasons of reciprocity between melancholy and laughter outlined above. Within the time and space of Burton's Anatomy, however, a persona representing the conversion of melancholy to all that is contained by laughter (mirth, mental and physical health, and philosophical consolation) holds its limited sway.

Although Burton shows himself fully aware of the interdependence of melancholy and laughter in human experience, he also conceives of their relationship in a purely symbolic way, as if from outside the bounds of actual existence. Art itself makes this possible; it is such a privileged realm. The Anatomy stands self-consciously off from experience in a way that no purely medical book would be able or care to do. Burton once signalizes the symbolic isolation of the world of his book by claiming that "It was written by an idle fellow, at idle times, about our Saturnalian or Dionysian feasts"[69] (122). The Roman

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69. Burton's source for this passage, identified neither by him nor his editors, is Daniel Heinsius' De Poetarum ineptijs & seculi vitio, p. 43, in Dissertatio Epistolica, Leiden, 1618.

Saturnalia was symbolically a time outside of time, when the golden age returned, the normal rules and hierarchies of life were suspended, and it was permitted to speak freely. When Burton makes this pronouncement, he is apologizing for his satiric liberty with transparent speciousness, but at the same time he also locates his work in a realm, analogous to that of art itself, during which life is actually lived in terms of symbolic action. The Saturnalia and similar festivals (including the court masques of Ben Jonson) are celebrated, in Bakhtin's phrase, on a "stage without footlights".[70] When Burton speaks of shrouding himself "in an unknown habit, to assume a little more liberty and freedom of speech (19)" he has in mind not only practical but imaginative liberties, those special liberties of fiction which he later identifies as Saturnalian. The "idle times" Burton mentions are not those that bring on melancholy's torments, but a festive, utopian idleness: "When our countrymen sacrificed to their goddess Vacuna, and sat tippling by their Vacunal fires, I writ this, and published this (122)". Again, Burton offers a fanciful analogue for the visionary, privileged world of his fiction. The world between Burton's covers is by no means a golden one, but it is in some forceful way contrary to the morbidity and madness that is its subject. It is the diseased, fallen world symbolically restored to health, or rather, in the act of being

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70. Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, p. 265.

restored to health by the salutary power of Democritus' laughter.

We may think of Burton's persona as consisting of two states forever opposed (however much in some ways they are forever one). Burton creates an antithesis out of the two sides of the same human condition. They may not be separable in experience or may succeed each other continuously in time, yet the drama of their symbolic antipathy may be enacted in art. The two sides of Democritus' nature are not statically opposed, nor is their cyclical alternation suggested. They represent the continuous conversion of melancholy to well-being. The actual banishment of the melancholy Democritus Jr. by the laughing Democritus Jr. is not represented as taking place; Democritus Jr.'s melancholy is never wholly cured, but it is eased by every stroke of the anatomist's pen. Democritus Jr. neither finds the seat of melancholy nor its absolute cure, except insofar as his satirical anatomy of mankind lays open the human condition and his laughter is itself as final a cure as man's nature permits. Like the destruction Tyro's "roring-megge" works upon "the walls of melancholy" (laughter is compared to a cannon), the laughing Democritus Jr. attacks the monotony of suffering and reduces it to tractability.

At this point we must make explicit what we have assumed all along, namely that Democritus Jr. does not disappear after the preface (as some scholars suppose[71]),

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71. Babb, Sanity in Bedlam, p. 15.

but is present as the narrator throughout the treatise as well. The fact that, as Babb notes, the name Democritus Jr. occurs only once in the body of the Anatomy, in an addition to the fifth edition, is of no consequence. There is no reason for Burton to develop the character of Democritus Jr. as such in the treatise proper, for he has already done so in the preface. The title page names Democritus Jr. as the author of the whole book and, in Le Blon's engraving, shows him holding it in his hand. Democritus' "vizor" is purportedly removed in "The Conclusion of the Author to the Reader" only after he has presumably written the foregoing treatise. Most importantly, the body of the Anatomy does accurately reflect the persona of its author. "I have laid myself open (I know it) in this treatise, turned my inside outward (27)", says Burton, drawing his figure from anatomy itself.

Throughout the Anatomy Burton's prose is at the same time, and in the same words, the voice of one melancholy and of one overcoming melancholy. On the one hand, it is detached, digressive, desperate, compulsively bookish, occasioned by its author's failure to win preferment and permeated with his own discontent, the product of a melancholy mind, the morbid anatomy of its own disease; yet it is at the same time exhilarating, playful, ironic, explosively vital, a sanctuary from despair, and the consolation of its own discontentedness. Just as Democritus Jr. wears two faces, his words, to borrow Bakhtin's term, are double-voiced.[72] We cannot, of course,

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72. Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, p.153.

hear two distinct voices any more than we can observe, except as Democritus Jr. puts them on in the preface, two faces. The inner syncrisis of Burton's persona, however, is continually reflected in his language and in a more abstract way, in the science and advice of every part of his treatise. We shall later explore this subject in some detail. Let us now simply point to one place where Burton describes his project in terms that display his two voices.

"I write of melancholy, by being busy to avoid melancholy. 'There is no greater cause of melancholy than idleness, no better cure than business', as Rhasis holds (20)," says Burton in defence of his subject. The effectiveness of this sound medical practice, however, is vitiated by two factors. First, even if Burton could avoid melancholy by writing about it, he could do so only by immersing himself in the subject itself, that is, by "melancholizing". Second, the act of writing, as Burton soon confesses, is itself an idle as well as a saving activity and therefore a cause of melancholy as well as a cure. Thus Burton's defence of business dissolves by degrees into the following formulation:

> As he that is stung with a scorpion, I would expel clavum clavo, comfort one sorrow with another, idleness with idleness, ut ex vipera theriacum, make an antidote out of that which was the prime cause of my disease. (21)

These remedies may be taken in two ways. The hopelessness of their procuring any vantage of sanity outside the province

of melancholy is obvious; yet, that admitted, the formula they propose is the only sane way to live with the disease. Like Montaigne discoursing vainly of vanity in his essay on that subject, Burton writes of his affliction in order to "faire valoir la vanité meme". When melancholy turns to regard itself and to enact itself, it is transfigured from naive experience to self-conscious experience, to play acting. The discontents of melancholy are not eradicated, but they are placed at the disposal of art. The very act of writing about melancholy, of anatomizing melancholy, generates the same distance from the melancholy body that the laughing Democritus achieves from the Abderites or from the objects of his anatomical dissection. We can observe the two faces of Democritus Jr., and of man, in the prose itself: clavum clavo, one sorrow with another, idleness with idleness.[73] The comfort that Burton proposes to himself is on one hand wholly illusory: between sorrow and sorrow there exists no difference in real experience. It is the saving ability of the human mind, however, and the one to which Burton appeals, knowingly to sustain illusion, to represent, to enact its fate, and thereby imaginatively to rise above it, even while fixed to the finite, time-bound, melancholy-ridden body. The double-talk of clavum clavo invites laughter at its own absurdity and at the absurdity of the project it proposes, but laughter, along with reading

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73. Burton repeats these formulae in more general contexts in the second Partition, on the cure of melancholy (II, 114, 199).

and writing, are those uniquely human passions that give the lie, if not to absurdity, at least to the melancholy to which human life would otherwise be wholly subject.

It would not be wholly accurate to attribute the Anatomy's melancholy, its laughter, or its combination of them to the character of its narrator alone, or rather, to him considered as an individual different from the rest of humanity. The reader as well as the author becomes an actor in Burton's book. The theatre into which Democritus Jr. intrudes is "common". "We have a new theatre, a new scene, a new Comedy of Errors, a new company of personate actors... a new company of counterfeit vizards (52)", exclaims the personate, vizarded Democritus Jr. The narrative 'I' of the Anatomy can itself maintain no discrete identity; it is always metamorphosing into "thou", "they", and "we".[74] We have already seen how Burton's 'I' is begotten upon the 'he', the 'other' that is Democritus himself. Democritus is only one 'other' among many pronouns and persons that all personate the same universal human nature, of which the figure of Democritus serves as the exemplar, and the 'I' the principal mouthpiece. The laughter of the Anatomy is not the sole prerogative of Democritus or Democritus Jr.; it is a universal laughter of which Democritus Jr. is one vessel as he writes and of which

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74. v. Joan Webber, The Eloquent "I", Madison, 1968, chap. 4, and Fish, op.cit.

the reader is another as he reads (that is, if he reads with the same spirit that the author writ). Burton's authors and examples are still other resonators of this laughter, for they too participate in Democritus Jr.'s nature through incorporation in his book, just as he too participates in their natures by quoting them. So too the melancholy of Democritus Jr. is universal and universally distributed among the Anatomy's cast of thousands. It naturally follows that the movement from melancholy to laughter becomes the reader's experience as it has been the writer's. By taking up the book which Democritus Jr. holds in his hand in the engraving of the frontispiece, the reader becomes Democritus Jr.'s double: "Par mihi lector erit", as Burton aptly prophesied in the poem "Democritus Jr. ad Librum Suum" which he prefixed to the Anatomy in 1632. For the reader, the Anatomy is a staggering recitation of the miseries to which he is incident; yet at the same time it is an ironic ride over them all, a reduction of them to inevitability or insignificance.

Such, in its outlines, is the meaning of the name of Democritus Jr. It will be recalled that Burton's 'I' claimed (or disclaimed) a relation to Democritus of Abdera in other particulars besides those of melancholy and laughter. A brief examination of them will show that they may be assimilated to the character of Democritus Jr. as we have already described it.

Democritus the Atomist

Democritus the atomist may appear to bear little relation to Democritus as laugher or as melancholic. With the satirical Democritus, he is initially rejected from consideration with respect to Democritus Jr.'s assumed name. But if Democritus Jr. does in fact write satire, the logic of Burton's irony suggests that he may also subscribe to the paradoxes of atomism. Indeed, he begins to demonstrate his knowledge of them with reference to their modern as well as ancient proponents in the first paragraph of the Anatomy. The dismissal of Democritus the cosmologist of terrestrial motion and infinite worlds is itself a brief "digression of air" that prefigures the famous later one. The progress of Burton's argument is momentarily suspended, and a vision of accidental cosmogony and a random universe, "of infinite worlds, in infinito vacuo, ex fortuita atomorum collisione, in an infinite waste, so caused by an accidental collision of motes in the sun" (15), is interposed. The incantatory dactyllic rhythms of this parenthesis betray the intensity with which Burton imagines its ideas. Though he may appear to reject the validity of this vision of the cosmos, the words he uses to describe it, "ridiculous, "prodigious", "paradox[ical]", apply very well to his own prose and to the human world the Anatomy portrays under the name of Democritus Jr.

While we cannot confidently attribute belief in atomism to Burton (whose own theories cannot be positively determined), Democritus' beliefs had been associated with

his satirical laughter by earlier writers. Not enough is known of the cosmological and ethical theories of the historical Democritus to gauge their relation to each other. Evidence points to an early separation in ancient times of his physical from his ethical writings, and it is probable that the laughing Democritus was developed out of the latter in the tradition of popular moralizing whose bias was strongly anti-scientific. It may be thus no more than a coincidence that one of the founders of atomism was also among the prominent Cynic types of the ridiculer of human folly; or, it may be that Democritus' theory of the universe coloured his ethical writings or their interpretation. In any case, the later Greek satirists did not fail to establish a connection between Democritus' laughter and his cosmology, however historically ill-founded it may have been. In his Philosophies for Sale (Vitarum Auctio), Lucian puts both Democritus and Heraclitus on the block in their characteristic attitudes. A prospective buyer interrogates them and asks Democritus:

> Buyer: What is the matter, man? Why are you laughing?
>
> Democritus: Dost thou need to ask? Because to me it seemeth that all your affairs are laughable, and yourselves as well.
>
> Buyer: What, are you laughing at us all, and do you think nothing of our affairs?
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> Democritus: Even so; for there is nothing serious in them, but everything is a hollow mockery, drift of atoms, infinitude.[75]

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75. Loeb Lucian, II, 475, trans. A.M. Harmon.

No translation can adequately reproduce Lucian's puns, which are essential to his meaning. The word rendered by "hollow mockery" (κενός) literally means both "void" (the 'emptiness' of atomic theory) and "vanity" (as applied to human affairs). Similarly, Lucian's "infinitude" (ἀπειρία) means both infinity in a physical sense and "inexperience" in a human one.[76] What has no existence or cannot be determined cannot be serious (σπουδαῖος) : hence Democritus' laughter. "Drift of atoms" corresponds to nothing in Lucian's text and is simply the translator's attempt to render Lucian's double play between the human and cosmic realms of the laughable.

We have already seen that the Hippocratic letters also allude to Democritus' atomism, and in a context in which it is associated both with his laughter and with the signs of his distraction. Democritus imagines himself to have no finality; he encounters himself at every turn in his dreams of cosmic voyaging. The same consciousness of the infinite that allows Democritus to view the vicissitudes of human life with laughing detachment deprives his mind of any finite point of rest. The infinite cannot be grasped; the pluralist universe of his imaginings dissipates Democritus' sense of his finite self. "Qui ubique est, nusquam est", as Burton complains of himself (17).

Burton's own ambivalence toward Democritus' theories can be felt even in the short passage of the preface quoted

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76. I follow the gloss on this passage by W.H. Tackaberry, Lucian's Relation to Plato and the Post-Aristotelian Philosophers, Toronto, 1930, pp. 23-24.

above. We will examine Burton's own picture of the cosmos in a later discussion of the "Digression of Air". While Burton's persona is clearly not derived from Democritus the atomist, it is consistent with the character given of him both in Burton's sources and in his own pages.

The Name of Democritus

Burton (Democritus Jr., 'I') is more obviously equivocal in his explanation of his relation to Democritus of Abdera when he advances a series of parallels between his own life and the life he has just sketched of Democritus and then denies that they are the basis for his taking Democritus' name. Burton is playing with a perplexing question: what is the relation of the name of Democritus to the voice that has assumed it, and, analogously, of the fictional character of Democritus Jr. to his creator? Although the historical Robert Burton unquestionably produced the Anatomy of Melancholy, he appears in it as author only to sign the postscript of 1621. The Anatomy is fiction, not autobiography, and as such its implied author is Democritus Jr., not Burton. The very question under consideration by Democritus Jr., however, is why he as author has assumed a name and habit not his own (i.e. a fictive idenity). Burton provides some answers from within the framework of his fiction itself and provokes us to consider the same questions from outside of it. Of course, the very process of metafictional commentary within the Anatomy suggests that a further level of critical comment

may itself be only another layer of fiction.

"Robert Burton" was the name given by Ralph and Dorothy Burton [in 1577] to their second son; "Democritus Jr." was the name that he gave to himself when he published the Anatomy of Melancholy in 1621. A younger brother (as he repeatedly informs us) and an unsuccessful candidate for professional advancement, in 1621 Burton took upon himself a new name and occupation (that of author). What Montaigne said of himself, "Je n'ay pas plus fait mon livre que mon livre m'a faict",[77] might as well have been said by Burton. He became in his fiction (and in history, as a result of it) another man. An unpreferred parson of the eighteenth century gave an account of his fictional identity that may throw light on the reason for Burton's:

> There is not a more perplexing affair in life to me, than to set about telling anyone who I am - for there is scarce anybody I cannot give a better account of than of myself; and I have often wished I could do it in a single word - and have an end of it. It was the only time and occasion in my life, I could accomplish this to any purpose - for Shakespear lying upon the table, and recollecting I was in his books, I took up Hamlet, and turning immediately to the grave-diggers scene in the fifth act, I laid my finger upon YORICK, and advancing the book to the Count, with my finger all the way over the name - Me voici! said I.[78]

Like Sterne, Burton points to "the name of Democritus" (15) to explain who he is. Names are among the most primitive

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77. Montaigne, Essais, II, 18, ed. cit., p. 648.

78. Laurence Sterne, A Sentimental Journey, ed. G. Stout, Berkeley, 1967, p. 221.

and powerful of literary symbols; they have an almost magical efficacy to impose an interpretation upon, if not also to achieve a kind of control over a person or thing. Both Burton's and Sterne's pseudonyms combine similar contraries: Yorick is both the skull in Hamlet's hand and Hamlet's father's jester, Democritus Jr. both the laughing and the melancholy anatomist. Both names solve riddles of identity. Both are fictions adopted by men who actually exist, but who exist without otherwise being able to give a satisfactory account of who they are. "Burton" and "Sterne" are false names; "Democritus Jr." and "Mr. Yorick" are names that possess the particular kind of truth that fiction is able to construct and the symbolic power that it can confer.

Although a fiction, "Democritus Jr." is not a gratuitous fantasy. Its effectiveness as a fiction consists in its being true to life, in its ability to construe motion as action, in Kenneth Burke's terms. It is not a remaking of life so much as a strategic renaming of it[79]. The details that Burton supplies about Democritus Jr.'s life in the Anatomy are, as far as we can tell, also true of his own; the device by which they have a meaning in his book and, one may suppose, in his life, is, however, provided by the fictional identity of Democritus Jr. It finally makes more sense to speak of Burton's own transparency in the

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79. See Burke's essay "Literature as Equipment for Living", referred to above, note 68.

Anatomy than that of his mask. The Anatomy of Melancholy under any other name might be very nearly the same book we have, but it would display the same combination of characterisitcs that, following Burton, we have explained with reference to the name of Democritus Jr.

Burton concludes his series of equivocal parallels by stating that he sometimes "walks abroad" to "look into the world" like Democritus and Diogenes before him, but

> not as they did, to scoff or laugh at all, but with a mixed passion.
> Bilem saepe, jocum vestri movere tumultus.
> I did sometime laugh and scoff with Lucian, and satirically tax with Menippus, lament with Heraclitus, sometimes again I was petulanti splene cachinno, and then again, urere bilis jecur, I was much moved to see that abuse which I could not mend. In which passion howsoever I may sympathize with him or them, 'tis for no such respect I shroud myself under his name. (19)

As we have seen, that "only respect" that Burton goes on to claim as the reason for his name, his resemblance to Democritus the anatomist of melancholy, later entails his sympathy with the anatomist's laughter at mankind. In one regard, Burton's disclaimer here is a teasing denial of the satirical idenity he has first broached as a possible reason for his name and later embraces; but, as is evident from what Burton says elsewhere in similar words about his style and his moods, the poses he describes are his honest reckoning of his various reactions to the world he surveys. As Democritus Jr., the narrator of the Anatomy acts a part that comprehends other parts. If he sometimes laughs and scoffs, sometimes laments or reproves, he is always, at the deepest level, the Democritus Jr. we have examined with reference to the broad categories of melancholy and laughter,

melancholy which implies "fellow feeling" and compassion for others, laughter of which scoffing is only one expression. Democritus Jr.'s last word, and the outermost frame of reference for all his words, belongs to this character, however particular sections of the Anatomy may answer to his particular dispositions toward his subject. A universal perspective is always present even while he laments the destruction caused by warfare, "condoles" the miseries of nuns, maids, and widows, vents his ire against the idle rich, or scoffs at extravagance in dress and diet.

Whatever its various dispositions, the "personality" of Burton's prose remains remarkably constant. The tone of his vituperations is barely distinguishable from that of his laments. Burton rarely sustains a mood or an argument; an incongruous aside or a contrary thesis ~~are~~ is likely to disturb emotional or intellectual repose. The more Burton changes, the more he appears to do so from a habit of inner instability for which laughter and tears, tragedy and comedy, thesis and antithesis are equally possible responses to experience. Burton's "mixed passion", like the "mixed scene" that is its object, is not only mixed as occasion prompts, but is so by nature. It would be no exaggeration to say that nothing exists in the Anatomy without being interpreted at some time in a contrary sense, Burton's rather remote deity included, who is both a cause and a cure of melancholy.

Democritus Jr. on Stage

Democritus Jr. does not introduce himself as a writer but as an actor. He "intrudes upon this common theatre, to the world's view" (15) to deliver a "Prologue" to a "Trage-comedie", as he respectively calls his preface and his treatise in "The Conclusion of the Author" of 1621 (Dddl). The entire Anatomy is the monologue of a single actor before the onlooking world, or rather, it is his imaginary dialogue with that world. For all his bookishness, Democritus Jr. addresses his readers with the immediacy and improvisatory give-and-take of a platform orator. His rhetorical techniques are familiar from the Greek and Roman diatribe, if not from Speakers' Corner. They are in essence dramatic: he mimics his imagined readers, puts words into their mouths, debates with them, counsels them. Introducing his Third Partition, he says:

> I am resolved... boldly to show myself in this common stage, and in this tragi-comedy of love to act several parts, some satirically, some comically, some in a mixed tone, as the subject I have in hand gives occasion, and present scene shall require or offer itself. (III, 10)

Democritus Jr. acts out the world's roles but remains an observer even as he does so. The "several parts" he enacts satirically, comically, and in a mixed tone are those of the anatomist's own various dispositions toward his material at the same time as they are those of the "tragicomedy of love" itself. As he says elsewhere of his style, it is "now comical, then satirical; now more elaborate, then remiss, as the present subject required, or

as at that time I was affected" (33). His performance is determined both from within and from without.

From the point of view of his audience (his readers, the world), Democritus Jr., as author of the Anatomy, is the dramatic spectacle on show. From the point of view of Democritus Jr. himself, this same audience is composed of "personate actors" who play a tragi-comedy with regard to which he is only a passive beholder or a simplex recitator (19). These isolated positions of reader and narrator do not of course exist as such in the Anatomy; they meet and merge in the dialogue between Democritus Jr. and his reader, both of whom abide in Burton's pages only in relation to each other (or in relation to themselves imagined as other selves). Even sequestered in his study, Democritus Jr. is both actor and spectator of himself: "I... lead a monastic life, ipse mihi theatrum. (18)". "'Tis all mine, and none mine": all in respect of Democritus Jr. as an actor of the world's several parts (including his own) "upon this common theatre", none in respect of him as a "mere spectator of other men's fortunes and adventures, and how they act their parts, which methinks are diversely presented unto me, as from a common theatre or scene",[80] both in that these two roles are resolved into a single (though dialogical) voice.

Democritus Jr.'s own role is that of an impersonator of others' roles. This is not to say that he acts others'

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80. My emphasis.

parts precisely as others act them; rather he acts them as his character (as well as his passing mood) disposes him to act them. In Burton's treatment of them, melancholy and laughter themselves imply an inner division between spectator and actor: the laugher laughs at himself, the melancholic observes himself as melancholy. The dialogue that Democritus Jr. holds with the reader, and by which he transforms the object he observes, mirrors the dialogue which he holds with himself. The creation of dialogue and doubleness is itself the transformation that Democritus Jr. works upon himself and his readers. Both he and they are made to see themselves as actors, i.e. from a perspective that opposes their one-sided selves to their possible, their other selves: their actual selves to their dramatic selves. They see themselves anatomized, "turned inside-outward". This same transformation takes place not only in the process of dialogue or of anatomy, but, as we have seen before, by means of Democritus Jr.'s mask itself, the instrument by which he "impersonates" his readers (and of course, himself). He gives himself and his readers the face of laughter. This face is both a dramatic mask and a mask symbolic of the entire dramatic dialogue in which it participates.

We can observe a similar manifestation of the Anatomy's symbolic drama and gather more particulars about Democritus Jr.'s dramatic presence in an addition Burton made to his book in 1628. In the two prior editions of Burton's treatise, Democritus Jr. steps forward to say:

> Gentle Reader, I presume thou wilt be very inquisitiue to knowe what personate Actor this is...[81]

Beginning with the third edition, he says:

> Gentle reader, I presume thou wilt be very inquisitive to know what antic or personate actor this is... (15)

The addition of 'antic' (used as a noun here) signals no change in the content or presentation of the Anatomy or its narrator; like most of Burton's additions, it clarifies or enriches a meaning already present. "Personate actor" suggests the masked actor of Roman drama and refers to Burton's use of a pseudonym; "antic" places Democritus Jr. among a certain class of contemporary English performers and suggests the quality of his disguise and delivery. Burton's addition was an afterthought, but it was a considered one and will repay consideration.

'Antic' was originally applied (as an adjective, from Italian antico, 'antique') to a style of ancient Roman pictorial and architectural ornament in which plant, animal, mythological, fantastic, and sometimes human forms were fancifully evolved out of each other. This classical (but very unclassical) decorative style became popular with Renaissance artists upon its rediscovery in the early sixteenth century with the excavation of the Baths of Titus in Rome (where the Laocoon group was also found). In the technical language of painting, 'antic' was later replaced, in English, in the latter seventeenth century,

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81. Anatomy, 1621, p.1.

by 'grotesque' (from the underground rooms, or 'grottoes', where the ornaments were first discovered).[82] The word had already given rise to figurative and substantive meanings, however. According to the O.E.D., Elizabethans used 'antic' to mean 'absurd from fantastic incongruity' in gesture, shape, or attire, and as a noun to denote 'a performer who plays a grotesque or ludicrous part, a clown, mountebank, or merry-andrew'. The substantive application of the word was derived not only from the bizarre costumes and bearing of such performers, but from their use of comic masks displaying the grinning, distorted features of antic architectural ornaments, such as gargoyles.

Masked or unmasked, the antic of Burton's opening sentence is clearly some kind of popular fool. The fool does not need to wear a mask, for his special dress and manner perform the same function, which is to manifest and symbolize his particular role. We can perhaps be more particular about what kind of fool's part Burton's antic plays. It is, first of all, the Anatomy's "phantastical" and cryptic title page that Democritus Jr. "presumes" will have made the reader curious to know "what antic or personate actor this is". Burton later compares the behaviour of readers in the face of such title pages to that of "silly passengers" that will stand gazing at "an antic picture in a painter's shop". The function of

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82. Frances K. Barasch, The Grotesque: A Study in Meanings, The Hague, 1971, discusses the pictorial style of antic and grotesque and traces the evolution of these words in the language of art.

fantastic title pages, to captivate the attention of the public, was also the role of a particular kind of antic of Burton's time, the mountebank's helper, sometimes called a merry-andrew or zany.[83] Seventeenth-century mountebanks often employed harlequined assistants to cry their bills and direct the public to their stages.[84] Burton's title page, as we have seen, displays the "rattling terms of art" (as a contemporary described them)[85] typical of such bills. Mountebanks themselves used such hyperbolical and technical language in commending their remedies to prospective customers, as the speech of Scoto Mantuano in Volpone witnesses. Burton's Anatomy advertises itself as a medical treatise, and it is natural enough that Burton should present its narrator as a mountebank or his crier. This is the most likely meaning of Burton's "antic" of

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83. C.J.S. Thompson, The Quacks of Old London, London, 1928, pp. 74ff.

84. Mountebanks themselves also wore special dress, including masks. Thompson quotes a contemporary reference (1602) to "these vizards wherin these maskers do march", p. 39.

85. Thompson, p. 79.

1628.[86] It is not, however, the only medical role Burton confers on Democritus Jr., as we shall shortly see. Nor is it the sole significance of his "antic".

Burton surprises his reader by presenting Democritus Jr. in person and on stage. The title page is filled with words; the reader gives them a voice and grins before he turns to see, as in a mirror, an antic step out from behind the title page to begin, or rather to continue his act. The reader may hastily transfer his own performance of the title page to the actor who reveals himself as its presenter, but the theatre does not cease to be "common", as Burton immediately calls it. Nor does Democritus Jr. leave off playing an antic (any more than a personate actor) after provoking the reader's curiosity by his extravagant and mysterious rhetoric. He plays various roles

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86. When the Earl of Rochester, banished from the court of Charles II, disguised himself as an Italian mountebank (the "Pathological and Imortal" Alexander Bendo) and set up his penthouse in Tower Hill, he wore an "antique cap" and employed faithful fellow wits, including Thomas Alcock, as his merry-andrews. These "sonorous Hawkers" with their "Apes Faces" procured the public to his stage. Rochester composed a satirical bill celebrating his powers (and comparing them to those of politicians) to which Alcock supplied a dedicatory preface. They have been reprinted and edited by Vivian de Sola Pinto as The Noble Pathologist or the Famous Mountebank, Nottingham, 1951.
It is interesting to note that Sterne's friend Thomas Bridges painted (sometime prior to 1759) the future author of Tristram Shandy as a mountebank's harlequined "Macaroni" (as Sterne described the figure) in a picture jointly executed by Sterne, who painted Bridges as the mountebank himself. Both men are shown on a public stage. The picture has been lost, but an engraving survives. It is reproduced and discussed by Arthur Cash, Laurence Sterne: The Early and Middle Years, London , 1975, pp. 299-300 and Plate II.

in the Anatomy, but he plays them throughout as an antic (and of course, as Democritus Jr.); it is precisely one of the features of an antic's performance that he constantly changes his attitudes and expressions. Democritus Jr.'s combination of scoffing, mimicry, and rapidly shifting poses is, however, particularly pronounced at his entrance upon the scene. Let us recall that Burton is imitating the mock-prolemium to Seneca's Apocolocyntosis, with its suggestion of the comic poses assumed by actors in the antique mimes.[87] No less than Seneca though, Burton retains his dramatic flexibility and incongruous mixtures of style and tone in the remainder of his work. In Rabelais too, the dramatic qualities that characterize his style throughout his books are at their most exaggerated in his prologues, where, like Burton and Seneca, he addresses his readers directly. In both Seneca and Rabelais, we infer a dramatic presence from the oral character of their language, with its declamatory but familiar tone. Burton presents us not only with similar language but with an antic to speak it, from which still more may be inferred.

The popular entertainments of past ages are difficult to reconstruct from source material, though perhaps not difficult to imagine. Of the jesters, clowns, quacks, and antics of the early seventeenth century we have few

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87. v. supra, Chapter 2, p.65 . The mime, like the Menippean satire, was one of the serio-comic sub-genres of antiquity.

descriptions and fewer images. It is certain that these performers were common at festivals and fairs, as they continue to be in parts of Europe today. In the theatres too, incidental entertainments such as jigs, acrobatics, clowning, and the like, before and after the play, appear to have been usual. We get a glimpse of them when Thomas Dekker imagines that the reader of his Gul's Hornbook may take up the book before the beginning of a new play and "read aloud, laugh aloud, and play the Antickes, that all the garlic mouthed stinkards may cry out, Away with the fool".[88] Dekker himself had pretended to don a fool's coat and to play a fool's part in the prologue to The Gul's Hornbook in explicit imitation of the Will Summers (Henry VIII's famous jester, who lived on as a stage character after his death in 1560) who delivers the prologue to Thomas Nashe's comedy Summer's Last Will and Testament. The themes of both Nashe's and Dekker's prologues are related to that of Burton's preface: Will Summers speaks as one fool on behalf of another (the author of the play), and Dekker maintains that the world is filled with fools and gulls and will therefore profit from his treatise. These books were both in Burton's library. Burton's "antic" may thus have his origin in the playhouse as well as on the mountebank's platform.

Lastly, it is possible that the image of the satirical

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88. Dekker, The Gul's Hornbook, London, 1609, p. 2.

satyr, i.e. of an actor disguised as a satyr delivering speeches of reproof from a public stage, such as Puttenham and other Renaissance theorists of satire had pictured the figure ,[89] may have been present to Burton's imagination as he began his "Satyricall Preface". Half-human and half-goat, satyrs commonly appeared in antic decoration and in antic masques (as the preludes to masques were known until Jonson incorporated them into the structure of the masque itself and renamed them anti-masques).[90] English verse satirists imitated the role of the satyr chiefly in their abusive language, but a dramatic image underlay their mannered style. We know from a note to Rabelais' Quart Livre that in sixteenth century France popular satirists did in fact perform in imitation of the supposed antique manner. In the "Briefve Declaration", Rabelais glosses "satyrique mocquerie" as:

> comme est des antiques Satyrographes Lucillius, Horatius, Persius, Juvenalis. C'est une maniere de mesdire d'un chacun à plaisir, et blasonner les vices, ainsi qu'on faict es jeux de la Bazoche, par personnaiges desguisez en Satyres.[91]

We have seen that the author of the "Discours de l'Imprimeur" that prefaces the Satyre Menippée particularly associates

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89. v. supra, Chapter 3, p. 98.

90. Stephen Orgel, The Jonsonian Masque, Cambridge (Mass.), 1965, pp. 34-35. Satyrs are featured in the anti-masque of Jonson's Oberon, where they are presented "leaping, and making antique action,and gestures."

91. Rabelais, Le Quart Livre, ed. cit., p. 272.

the speeches of the satyr-actors with the Menippean manner of stylistic mélange and sharp jesting. The Satyre Menippée is not put into the mouth of such an actor, but its prologue is the harangue of a mountebank, who heaps exaggerated praise upon a wonder-drug called Spanish catholicon. This praise is ironic; it might be said to be the satyr's abuse in another key. It is doubtful that Burton thought of his borrowed "habit" as a satyr's as he came to present his preface, but the rhetorical pose of the satyrical satyr is in many respects analogous to the antic guise in which Democritus Jr. conducts his survey of the world's madness and melancholy.

"Antic" extends Burton's commentary on himself as author. It forms part of his interpretation of his own work, and it may serve to guide ours also. Burton's opening description of his stage presence must of course be placed with his other descriptions of his authorial role. One of them, his defence of his authorship of the Anatomy as a combination of his medical interests and his spiritual vocation, might appear irreconcilable with his self-portrayal as a 'grotesque and ludicrous performer'. Only by taking the parallax of such antitheses, however, can we hope to approach the centre of Burton's work.

"The last and greatest exception" that may be taken against his book, Burton speculates, "is, that I, being a divine, have meddled with physic" (34). This combination required defence, as Browne's Religio Medici will remind us.

Burton answers this hypothetical charge by an appeal to the usefulness of his enterprise. As Fish remarks, Burton could be an effective apologist when he wished to be.[92] His defence of himself is not devoid of satire or playfulness, but its conclusion keeps an even tenor and presents a strong case:

> Who knows not what an agreement there is betwixt these two professions? A good divine either is or ought to be a good physician, a spiritual physician at least, as our Saviour calls Himself, and was indeed... They differ but in object, the one of the body, the other of the soul, and use divers medicines to one cure: one amends animam per corpus, the other corpus per animam... Now this being a common infirmity of body and soul, and such a one that hath as much need of a spiritual as a corporal cure, I could not find a fitter task to busy myself about, a more apposite theme, so necessary, so commodious, and generally concerning all sorts of men, that should so equally participate of both, and require a whole physician. A divine in this compound mixed malady can do little alone, a physician in some kinds of melancholy much less, both make an absolute cure. (37)

Burton does indeed offer remedies as a "whole physician" in the Anatomy, though he rarely claims to be able to effect "an absolute cure" for melancholy (he has evidently not found one himself). Burton's defence, however eloquent, is made to answer an objection. As he later says, he is able to excuse himself with as much facility as others can accuse him. Here his tone is earnest, but here no less than elsewhere, his words must be weighed

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92. Fish, op.cit., p. 316.

with others of his words, including those which portray him as an antic and as the son of the laughing Democritus. If, as Fish says, Burton "clothes himself in all the authority... of the divine physician",[93] he also wears a suit of motley.

Burton was well aware that he might be taken to task not only for meddling with physic, but also for indulging in jest and satire.

> If I have overshot myself in this which hath been hitherto said, or that it is, which I am sure some will object, too phantastical, "too light and comical for a divine, too satirical for one of my profession," I will presume to answer, with Erasmus in like case, 'Tis not I, but Democritus, Democritus dixit: you must consider what it is to speak in one's own or another's person, an assumed habit and name - a difference betwixt him that affects or acts a prince's, a philosopher's, a magistrate's, a fool's part, and him that is so indeed. (121)

We have already noticed the logical inconsistency of this appeal to the privilege of dramatic role-playing.[94] Burton claims the serious spiritual authority of a divine when it suits his purposes to do so and, when it becomes necessary to acknowledge his levity, he excuses himself by pretending that the divine is only playing another's satirical part. This means of saving appearances in fact sanctions the very assumed roles that it appears to depreciate. When Burton runs the risk of attack because of the lightness inherent in his subject itself (such as

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93. ibid.

94. supra, pp. 171-72.

love-melancholy), as well as for his mode of treating it, his self-defence takes a less sophistic turn. In the preface to his third partition, he again cites the example of Erasmus (and no less than twenty-six other "grave and worthy men"), but as a divine, not as the manipulator of the mask of Folly. His intent, Burton says, echoing Horace's "prodesse et delectare", "is as much to profit as to please" or, in the language of medicine, "not only [to] recreate, but rectify the mind" (III, 7). Horace's "Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci" is quoted in its familiar Latin in the same passage. In his third edition, Burton replaced "Omne meum, nihil meum" as the epigraph to the Anatomy with Horace's line, perhaps in response to a need to defend his book against any "offense to gravity" it may have given.

There is of course nothing singular in this line of defence, especially given the importance of the Horatian ideal for Renaissance satire in the Lucianic vein. For Burton, a light, even fantastical bearing was vindicated by the serious end of his discourse. Jests might serve "to refresh my Muse a little, and my weary readers" (III,6). His writings, Burton hopes, "shall take like gilded pills, which are so composed as well to tempt the appetite and deceive the palate, as to help and medicinally work upon the whole body" (III, 7). For all its evident importance to Burton, however, this defence of the pleasing aspects of his book underplays the extent and finally the seriousness of the Anatomy's comic element. The gilding on Burton's pills itself effects a purge. Far from deceiving the

palate, it is part of the medicine. Although he defends the desirability of mixing the pleasing with the useful, and the serious with the comic, Burton assumes (as his defensive posture obliges him to do) an antipathy between them. His work itself, however, combines these categories in a way that goes beyond the rhetorical illusionism (the deception of the palate) described in his moralizing defence. Burton is capable of passages of unalloyed gravity or foolery, according to whether he is treating artificial allurements to love or the despair of an afflicted conscience, but the river of his style (to borrow his own metaphor) tends to absorb these and other contraries in its essentially uniform and continuous motion. Burton's style may be "now serious, then light" (32) by turns, but it is typically (and at some level, always) serious and comic together. The serious and the comic sustain each other; they are (as it were) the opposite banks of the same river. Their mutuality is as characteristic of Lucianic writing as the combination of utile dulci.

It is no more possible to divorce the antic from the divine in Democritus Jr. than it is the sober from the fantastic in Anatomy's title page. Democritus Jr.'s claim to provide an "absolute cure" for melancholy, for example, befits a mountebank as much as it does a complete physician. Neither can effect such a cure, but each fails to do so in a different way. The only recourse of the divine physician is to help to moderate the causes and mitigate the effects of the disease. This is no small

endeavour, but insofar as it is not what the physician promises to perform, his work, as Fish says, "stands for the failure to effect a declared intention".[95] The claim of the mountebank, however, is not wholly serious to begin with, even if it is made with great show of solemnity and zeal. The mountebank may wear the black robes of the learned doctor (in effect, the same habit as the divine, and likewise symbolizing authority and seriousness), but he also employs a jester who mocks both him and his audience (this was a usual practice in Burton's day).[96] His failure to achieve an absolute cure is thus part of the performance he stages. His ointments and powders are perhaps as worthless as those sold by the Earl of Rochester (as Dr. Alexander Bendo) at bargain prices, but his real remedy consists not in them, but in the dramatization of their worthlessness as cures. This does not deter the mountebank from praising his nostrums to the skies; in fact, it permits him to do so. His drama is essentially comic, although its object is to procure well-being to the mountebank's audience (by easing gravidum cor, heaviness of heart) and of course to procure fame and revenue to the mountebank himself. It is a kind of generous swindle (books have their prices too). One might say that laughter

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95. Fish, op.cit., p. 350.

96. C.J.S. Thompson, op.cit., p. 74.

(by whatever name) was the remedy offered by the mountebank "to cure all diseases". It is interesting to find that the bill of a "High German Doctor" of early eighteenth century London claimed that his "Friendly pills",

> by dilating and expanding the Gelastick muscles ... clear the Officina Intelligentiae, correct the exorbitancy of the Spleen, mundify the Hypogastrium, comfort the Sphincter and are an excellent remedy against Prosopo Chlorosis or Green Sickness... They operate seven several ways, viz. Hypnotically, Hydroptically, Cathartically, Propysinactically, Hydragogically, Pulmatically, and lastly Synecdochically, by corroborating the whole Oeconomia Animalis.[97]

The "Gelastick muscles" are of course those involved in the production of laughter. The string of adverbs is physiologically accurate. The doctor's pills (his bill itself is one) are 'pills to purge melancholy'. It is worth recalling that Tristram Shandy was written "against the spleen"[98] and so of course is Burton's Anatomy, by a follower of the laughing philosopher of antiquity.

Democritus Jr. proposes remedies of many sorts in remarkable profusion, but he recognizes that no remedy short

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97. ibid., p. 142.

98. Ed. James A. Work, New York, 1940, p. 301. The full passage is:

> If 'tis wrote against anything, - 'tis wrote, an' please your worships, against the spleen; in order, by a more frequent and a more convulsive elevation and depression of the diaphragm, and the succussations of the intercostal and abdominal muscles in laughter, to drive the gall and other bitter juices from the gall bladder, liver and sweet-bread of his majesty's subjects, with all the inimicitious passions which belong to them, down into their duodenums.

of death or the grace of God can wholly relieve man of his melancholy. He elaborates remedies with one eye on their value in mitigating the effects of melancholy and in consoling man to himself and another on their insufficiency to work a real change in man's condition. His spiritual and medical pharmacopœia is at once treasured and ridiculous, and his prescriptions are both serious and comic. Democritus Jr. thus acts the roles both of physician and clown. His diagnoses and remedies (most of them, at any rate) represent an attempt to gather into a single book the sum of the practical wisdom of the West. For all their weightiness, however, their truth or the promise of their efficacy is undercut at some level, sometimes by pointed irony, more often by a kind of drift towards the absurd or impossible. Burton disdains the cures offered by "circumforanean rogues" such as quacks and empirics (I, 209), but his disdain is so playfully exaggerated as to suggest his covert identification with their situation. The mountebank and his merry-andrew already form a comic (but potentially serio-comic) pair. For the figure of the mountebank Burton substitutes a whole physician seriously committed to the moral, spiritual, and corporal health of his readers; however, he retains the antic's part with its equally "whole" mockery. Each part implies the other, and they are, after all, enacted by a single Democritus Jr. We can see, though, that Democritus Jr. plays the antic (as fool or jester) principally in the satirical preface (which is nevertheless not without serious

import). He then steps behind a curtain and reappears as the doctor and man of knowledge to perform the Anatomy proper, yet still wearing, like Rochester, an "antique cap" to signify his double role and the limits of his knowledge.

I do not mean to suggest that Burton had such detailed images of the performances of mountebanks in his mind or intended that his reader should have them. I have explained Burton's role as author of the Anatomy in terms that are, however, suggested by his own words and by analogy to performances that undoubtedly formed part of his experience of the world. A similar picture of his double role might have been derived from the relationship in the Anatomy of the fool and the wise man, as we shall see in considering the satirical argument of Burton's preface. The pattern of mutually sustaining, dialogically related contraries extends in fact to every aspect of the Anatomy's world, understandably, for Democritus Jr., melancholy and laughing, actor and spectator, physician and antic, touches everything in the book. The pattern may be resumed by the idea of the serio-comic itself, the spoudogeloios, philosophia ludens, which is central not only to the Anatomy of Melancholy, but to the literary genre to which it belongs.

A Reason of the Subject

Among the reasons Burton gives for his subject (for his "reason" immediately becomes "more than one") is one that

qualifies all the rest: he has undertaken his task, Burton says, "impellente genio"(21), 'my genius driving me to it'. Burton may rationalize his motives for writing, but he recognizes that ultimately they lie beyond his conscious control. His reasons for his subject accordingly bear the character of conjectures: "or peradventure as others do, for fame, to show myself"; "I might be of Thucydides' opinion..."; "or as he did, of whom Felix Platerus speaks ..."; "concerning myself, I can peradventure affirm..." (21-22). Though there may be a conscious effort at mystification in these uncertainties, they also appear to spring from Burton's genuine doubt as to what the effective motivations of his actions are. Burton is not clouding what is clear to him; he is playing with his own incapacity to understand himself and the origins and purposes of his book. The Anatomy is as well explained as the spontaneous "evacuation" of a troubled mind (21) as it is in terms of the several (not wholly consistent) reasons that Burton proposes for it after the fact. The reasons that Burton gives should not be discounted, but they must be considered part of his fiction as well as possible keys to it. We have already seen that Burton first states that he has written the Anatomy to help himself and others; before he discloses his "chief motives" (38), which refine upon these, he takes up several other matters that also prepare his reader for the discourse eventually to follow.

An Aside on Style

Burton's reason for his subject runs to fifty-thousand words in the posthumous sixth edition of the Anatomy, the last to contain new material supplied by Burton. One sixth of that sum of words is not directly concerned with the subject matter of the book at all, but rather with the manner in which the subject is presented. The entire section on style took up less than four quarto pages in the preface to the first edition; by the sixth, it had grown to eight pages in folio. Some of this additional material was transferred from "The Conclusion of the Author" of 1621, but much was grafted on in Burton's usual manner. Burton claimed that he had no time to polish his style. Although he did in fact make minor stylistic revisions from edition to edition, evidently he considered his time better spent in commenting upon the prose he poured out in such profusion "with as small deliberation as I do ordinarily speak" (31). The lines of Burton's argument in this section parallel those we have observed in his defence of his title and inscription: he excuses his own style by appeal to that of others, on which he heaps ridicule. Here he makes no pretence of excepting his own practice, however: "For my part, I am one of the number, nos numerus sumus" (24). He parries various possible (or perhaps actual) criticisms of his work in such a way as to thrust directly at the reader and punto reverso at himself: "Others have done as much, it may be more, and perhaps thou thyself, Novimus

et qui te, etc. We have all our faults" (26). From a mere spectator of the literary scene, Burton has become an actor upon it; the actor defends what the spectator derides. Burton appears to be shadow-boxing as much as defending his work against the censure of the "modern wits" and "illiterate scribblers" of his time. His prose is driven by the desire both to accuse and to defy. He could never resolve the question of the propriety of his style, but only extend it at greater length when he re-opened the matter with each successive edition of the Anatomy. Indeed, the particular stylistic issues that Burton debates sometimes seem secondary to his need to find topics on which to discharge his nervous energy, in order to serve the genius that impels him. His incessant arguments and illustrations attempt not only to persuade (often for and against the same point), but serve as the toys by which "an unconstant, unsettled mind" (17) distracts itself from horror vacui.

Burton concludes his miscellaneous defences of his style and subject by combining a tart attack on the deluge of writings in divinity (such that "whole teams of oxen cannot draw them" [35]) with the earnest defence of his "medicinal subject" that we have already examined. At this point, one third of the way through "Democritus Junior to the Reader", the preface is still spoken of as "ensuing", and Burton's principal reasons for writing a treatise on melancholy remain to be disclosed. Burton divulges them in the hope that his work will win approval,

> when you have more fully considered of the matter of this my subject, rem substratam, melancholy, madness, and of the reasons following, which were my chief motives: the generality of the disease, the necessity of the cure, and the commodity or common good that will arise to all men by the knowledge of it. (38)

Although the preface makes use of the devices of satire from Democritus Jr.'s first entry onto the scene, the "satyricall" argument promised on the title page as "conducing to the following discourse" properly begins with the demonstration of the generality of the disease.

The Argument (I)

One might suppose that, given the possibility that a reader may come to the Anatomy because he does acknowledge his own melancholy, Burton's lengthy justification of his treatise would be superfluous. Unlike a writer such as Timothy Bright, however, Burton does not write for melancholics alone, that is, for a class of diseased individuals distinguishable from those who are sound. This is the conception of disease he seeks to overthrow. In its place he erects the standard of a universal malady from which no one is free. For a particular melancholic suffering from a particular complaint Burton substitutes a universal subject, man philosophically, medically, and historically extended. Burton re-creates every reader in his universal aspect, so that the whole Anatomy, not just the rubric under which he may have considered himself melancholy, will become his concern, in posse if not in esse. Burton's tongue-in-cheek caution of what may happen to "the

present or future reader, who is actually melancholy" (38) if he reads (as he most certainly will) the sections on symptoms and prognostics describes Burton's own method of fictive generalization. Burton fears lest his reader,

> by applying that which he reads to himself, aggravating, appropriating things generally spoken to his own person (as melancholy men for the most part do), he trouble or hurt himself and get in conclusion more harm than good. (38)

The threat of harm is meant as persiflage, however psychologically plausible the situation which Burton imagines. Burton does intend to "trouble" his reader, but for his reader's own ultimate benefit.

Few studies of the Anatomy have approached Burton's preface in terms of the sustained satirical exposition that it presents.[99] One exception is the essay by Stanley Fish, which, although devoted in principle to the book as a

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99. William R. Mueller, "Robert Burton's 'Satyricall Preface'", Modern Language Quarterly XV (1954), pp. 28-35, discusses Burton's claim to be a corporal and spiritual physician. Irene Samuels, "The Brood of Folly", Notes and Queries CCIII (1958), 430-431, notes certain correspondences between Burton's preface and Erasmus' Praise of Folly. Ruth Fox, The Tangled Chain, devotes her concluding chapter to various aspects of Burton's preface, including its "Argumentum". Reinhard H. Friederich, "Taming his Melancholy Spaniel: Persona and Structure in Robert Burton's 'Democritus Jr. to the Reader'", Philological Quarterly 55 (1976), 195-210, focuses on the "baroque" qualities of Burton's style and point of view; and Richard L. Nochimson, "Burton's Anatomy: the Author's Purposes and the Reader's Response", Forum for Modern Language Studies 13 (1977), 265-184, handles the matter of the preface principally with respect to its evolution through Burton's six editions.

whole, in fact bases its argument on a reading of the preface.[100] The merits of Fish's reading are, in my view, compromised by the conclusions he draws, but his chapter on the Anatomy in Self-Consuming Artifacts makes an excellent starting point from which to consider the satire of Burton's preface.

The argument of Fish's book as a whole must briefly be recapitulated before his approach to Burton may be understood. Fish holds that certain works of seventeenth-century prose and poetry, among them the Anatomy of Melancholy, seek to move their readers from a state of error or unsoundness to one of well-being or illumination by a dialectical process. This argument rests upon four theses. The first concerns the distinction between dialectic and rhetoric. According to Fish, rhetorical forms "flatter" a reader's preconceptions, in that "whatever one is told can be placed and contained within the categories and assumptions of received systems of knowledge".[101] A dialectical presentation, on the other hand, "is disturbing, for it requires of its readers a searching and rigorous scrutiny of everything they believe in and live by".[102] The end of rhetoric, says Fish, is persuasion, but the end of dialectic is conversion, that is, a change in

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100. Stanley Fish, Self-Consuming Artifacts, chap. VI.

101. ibid., p. 1.

102. ibid.

the hearer's or reader's soul. In dialectic,

> the relationship is finally less one of speaker to hearer, or author to reader than of physician to patient, and it is as the 'good physician' that the dialectician is traditionally known... He tells his patients what they don't want to hear in the hope that by forcing them to see themselves clearly, they may be moved to change the selves they see.[103]

To this classic opposition between rhetoric and dialectic, Fish adds another (his second thesis), "an opposition between two ways of looking at the world".

> The first is the natural way of discursive, or rational understanding; its characteristic motion is one of distinguishing, and the world it delivers is one of separable and discrete entities where everything is in its proper place. The second way is antidiscursive and antirational; rather than distinguishing, it resolves, and in the world it delivers the lines of demarcation between places and things fade in the light of an all-embracing unity.[104]

Fish contends that in a dialectical experience, "one moves, or is moved, from the first to the second way". He glosses the second way of all-embracing unity in the terms of philosophy and religion: "the way of the good, the way of inner light, the way of faith". This understanding of the "second way" serves Fish nicely in his later discussion of Donne's Death's Duell, but it leads him into perplexity, I believe, at the close of his essay on Burton. Fish goes on to qualify his characterization of the "second

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103. ibid., p.2.

104. ibid., p.3.

way". "Whatever [its] designation", he writes,

> the movement of its full emergence is marked by the transformation of the visible and segmented world into an emblem of its creator's indwelling presence ... and at that moment the movement of the rational consciousness is stilled, for it has become indistinguishable from the object of its inquiry.[105]

This conversion into identification with transcendent unity makes perfect sense when the reader is initiated by his divine physician into the beatific vision, but it causes difficulties when the unity is that of melancholy or madness and the creator's indwelling presence that of Democritus Jr.

For Fish the further thesis follows that "a dialectical experience succeeds at its own expense" and thus becomes "the vehicle of its own abandonment",[106] i.e. a self-consuming artifact. The dialectical work exists, in Fish's, or rather Wittgenstein's metaphor, as a ladder whose rungs the reader kicks away as he climbs past them to the ultimate enlightenment of his soul. Thus the proper object for literary analysis, Fish concludes in his fourth thesis, is not the work in itself, but the work in the reader.

Fish holds that the strategy of dialectical works is "to persuade not to a point but to a vision". He maintains, however, that Burton's vision is different from those of the other seventeenth-century writers with whom Burton shares 'self-consuming' stylistic habits:

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105. ibid.

106. ibid.

> The difference is to be located in something that is missing in Burton, something so crucial that its absence transforms the meaning and even the value of all that he shares with the others. In the prose of Bunyan, Donne, Bacon, and Milton, and in the poetry of Herbert, the undermining of discursive forms and the related devaluation of rational thought is but one half of a movement which is completed only when the availability of something better is affirmed. That affirmation is witheld in the Anatomy, and as a result the negativity of the work's rhetorical thrust is never redeemed.[107]

If this is Fish's experience of the Anatomy, most readers have not shared it (one who has, T.E. Brown, concluded that Burton had played "an enormous labyrinthine joke" on his readers).[108] Fish begrudges the Anatomy the power momentarily to distract the reader's melancholy and unhelpfully to console him, but like Brown he comes away convinced that Burton is not a good physician but a mere deceiver. This almost wilfull miscomprehension of the Anatomy is all the more puzzling for concluding an essay which so amply demonstrates its author's sensitivity to the nuances of Burton's prose.

At the outset of his book, Fish explains his decision not to approach his chosen works in terms (among others) of scepticism, allegory, praisings of folly, Renaissance anatomies, the tradition of paradox, genre, the Baroque, and so forth.[109] Insofar as his motives are like those

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107. ibid., pp. 350-351.

108. T.E. Brown, "Robert Burton, A Causerie", New Review XIII (1895), 257-66, p.258.

109. Fish, xi.

which discouraged Burton from publishing his sermons, one may sympathize with them. Yet Fish's alternative, to experience seventeenth-century prose without reference to these categories, overlooks the fact that anatomy, paradox, and the like are not merely "taxonomic" labels invoked by scholars, as Fish suggests, but conventions which actively direct the experience of readers, just as they help encode the meaning of authors. They form part of the experience of literature no less than the movement of syntax on the page. Fish's model of dialectic is not an adequate substitute for these conventions, either in terms of experience or analysis. Fish claims a historical validity for his model, but in fact he simply applies to seventeenth-century prose a paradigm extracted from Plato and Augustine. While the historical influence of these writers is immense, Fish demonstrates it only in the case of the Augustinian Donne.

Fish's disappointment with Burton's Anatomy results on the one hand from his unwillingness to depart from a preconceived paradigm, and on the other, from his failure to trust the insights that his paradigm yields. Fish shows how Burton's prose continually persuades his reader to a vision of the world as universally melancholy, but he is at a loss to justify that vision. Instead of asking what Burton's vision might mean in terms of the "second way" of dialectical illumination, he blames Burton for not providing a reconciling prayer, a declaration of faith, a pattern of heavenly intervention, or a framework of moral and epistemological optimism such as the other writers treated

in Self-Consuming Artifacts supply. In effect, Burton is blamed for not recanting the vision which the whole thrust of his book has aimed at establishing. According to Fish's paradigm of dialectic,

> the individual soul is asked to reject as partial and distorting the version of reality yielded by the senses and by a merely rational wisdom and to raise itself to the point where the truly and wholly real once again comes into view.[110]

If we translate this paradigm into the terms of Burton's Anatomy, we shall see that the individual reader is asked to forego belief in his own sanity in favour of a revelation of his melancholy and madness and of a world unhinged. Fish is not equipped to understand such a conversion in terms of a model derived from Plato's Phaedrus and Augustine's De Doctrina Christiana, for he cannot see how an education into a vision of universal madness might correspond to a raising up of the soul. He does not consider the possibility that dialectic might operate outside the assumption of religious or epistemological certainty. Fish wants a wholly positive illumination, and Burton serves him with what he considers an unredeemably negative one. Hence his reservations about the value of the Anatomy.

In Fish's model, the culminating point of the dialectical process comes when the aspiring soul has turned the

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110. ibid., p.7.

(phenomenal) world upside-down and embraced "the truly and wholly real". The world revealed by Democritus Jr. is indeed upside-down, but the ultimate truth about it resides only with the divine. Burton's aim is not to transcend the fallen, upside-down world, but to consider life *within* it. Instead of moving *toward* a vision of the world upside-down, Burton's *Anatomy begins* with one. Understandably, Fish can see in the *Anatomy* only a tautology of monstrous proportions. To him the body of the treatise is superfluous, for it is "merely a larger and schematically obvious version of what happens in the preface."[111] Although it is true that the vision of the preface is extended through the treatise that follows, the sections and subsections of the *Anatomy* are not meant to be kicked away as soon as a postlapsarian note is sounded and the *malus genius* of melancholy is raised. On the contrary, they present a behaviour book for fallen man. Burton's consolations are more than the vision of *commune naufragium* that Fish finds so unhelpful. Fish does not perceive that the phenomena of melancholy themselves can provide a kind of cure (though no absolute one) for the disease. He does not recognize that the *Anatomy* administers antidotes against the vision to which it submits the reader, and that indeed the *Anatomy's* vision is in some ways its own antidote.

In short, Fish sees negativity where Burton presents irony. Burton consumes the one-sided world of sanity and

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111. Fish, p. 332.

reason, and he creates a two-sided unity in its place. His is a kind of sublunary transcendence that transforms the wholly negative and the wholly positive alike. The paradigm of Burton's vision is to be found not in Plato's Phaedrus but in his Apology, in which Socrates describes his ironic quest for a wise man. It is not surprising to find that Burton assimilates Socrates' search to the plot of his own preface:

> When Socrates had taken great pains to find out a wise man, and to that purpose had consulted with philosophers, poets, artificers, he concludes all men were fools. (46)

Socrates leaves his interlocutors with nothing better than a knowledge of their own ignorance, but for him such "negativity" is the sum of human wisdom. A similar irony sustains Burton's vision of universal folly and melancholy.

Plato's Socratic writings lie at the origins not only of dialectical but also of dialogical prose, as we have seen. The generic features of Menippean satire provide the best setting for the experience of Burton's readers and the discourse of his critics. Not only its leading thesis (that all are mad), but its secondary themes (utopia, the world upside-down), its mode of argument (paradox), its plot (the search for a wise man), its universal laughter, and the removed point of observation that it assumes, place Burton's preface in the Menippean tradition outlined in previous chapters. As we shall see, Burton's 'reason of his subject' in the preface expounds an argument by which the satire of the entire Anatomy may be understood.

The View-From-Above

The opening paragraph of Burton's demonstration of universal madness and melancholy presents a cluster of satiric themes and commonplaces. The first and foremost of these is the removed point of vantage on the world, from which narrator and reader are to consider what follows.

> Of the necessity and generality of this which I have said, if any man doubt, I shall advise him to make a brief survey of the world, as Cyprian adviseth Donat; "supposing himself to be transported to the top of some high mountain, and thence to behold the tumults and chances of this wavering world". (38-39)

This perspective, invoked by way of rhetorical introduction, is implicit throughout the argument to follow and indeed, throughout the entire Anatomy. Here taken from Cyprian's letter to Donatus, the 'view-from-above' was a topos of classical moral and satirical writing developed by the Greek Cynics and particularly associated with Menippus by Varro and Lucian.[112] Lucian employs it repeatedly

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112. Katascopos and episcopos (both meaning 'looker-down') were among the titles given to the Cynic sage (v. Oltramare, Les Origines de la Diatribe Romaine, pp. 40, 55, 59). As a literary perspective, the view-from-above is associated with Menippus by Varro in The Tomb of Menippus and by Lucian in Icaromenippus and Menippus and is used elsewhere by these writers (Varro: Endymiones, Eumenides, and Know Thyself, in Saturae Menippeae ; Lucian: The Fisherman, Charon, and the two dialogues just named). As the perspective of Zeus on the affairs of men, v. the Iliad, 8, 51, and Erasmus, Praise of Folly, trans. B. Radice, p. 107. v. also E.T. Silk, "The God and the Searches for Happiness: Notes on Horace's Repetition and Variation of a Favorite Topos", Yale Classical Studies 19 (1966), 233-50.

in his Menippean dialogues, including Charon or the Inspectors (literally 'Overseers'), which Burton cites at length several pages later.

> Charon in Lucian, as he wittily feigns, was conducted by Mercury to such a place, where he might see all the world at once; after he had sufficiently viewed, and looked about, Mercury would kneeds know of him what he had observed. He told him he saw a vast multitude and a promiscuous, their habitations like molehills, the men as emmets... Some were brawling, some fighting, riding, running, sollicite ambientes, callide litigantes, for toys and trifles... In conclusion he condemned them all for madmen, fools, idiots, asses, etc. (47)

Whatever particular dramatic setting the view-from-above is given, its import is always the same in the menippea, of whose structural doubleness it provides a concrete image. It opposes the point of view (the version of 'truth') prevailing in the realm that is being surveyed, not from another point of view (another particular 'truth' as, for example, a contrary ideology), but from a position that is indeterminate of itself, whose truth rests in its very unfixity or unapproachable transcendence. The view-from-above represents a principle of otherness. An overseer may engage the world below in dialogue but may never be absorbed into it. He is, in Cyprian's phrase, "e terrenis contactibus liber".[113] A philosophic universalism is implied in any view-from-above or from-without; to "see all the world at once" is the necessary consequence of being wholly removed from it. Whatever

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113. Sancti Cypriani Episcopi Opera, ed. M. Simonetti, Turnholt, 1976, vol. II, p.6.

conclusions the adoption of such a perspective leads the overseer to, as long as the view-from-above is maintained, they must be conclusions in which nothing is concluded.

An example may clarify what by its very nature is difficult to express. In Book XI of Paradise Lost, Michael leads Adam to a hill from which he is to behold in a vision the future of mankind.

> It was a hill,
> Of Paradise the highest, from whose top
> The hemisphere of earth in clearest ken
> Stretched out to the amplest reach of prospect lay.
> (XI, 377-80)

This view-from-above is not that of the menippea, but that of a resolutely monological epic. Michael and Adam "ascend/ In the Visions of God" (376-77). Adam shares in God's providence and foresees the emergence into history of the Logos, the Word made flesh. The Menippean overseer is afforded no such visions. The nature of his perceptions is determined by his ignorance of the divine, the final word. He surveys the same kingdoms as Adam, but without the interpretation provided by Michael he sees not a design, but a heterogeneous multiplicity of words and actions: the Word upside-down.

In and of itself the view-from-above entails a new perception of the world. Burton states as much in terms of cause and effect: "if thou shalt either conceive, or climb up to see, thou shalt soon perceive that all the world is mad, that is is melancholy, dotes" (39). Such a truth is not so much revealed as created by the overseer. Demonstration is secondary to the immediate

optical or intellectual perception that a removed vantage induces. Burton's survey of the world does not evolve a logical argument but supports a foregone conclusion. He has "ended his task", as he says, when he deems that he has "sufficiently illustrated that which I took upon me to demonstrate at first" (120). Whatever their validity as demonstrations, his arguments succeed as illustrations, and his perspective being granted or assumed by the reader, illustration suffices for proof.

The Argument (II)

> Give me but a little leave, and you shall see by what testimonies, confessions, arguments I will evince it, that most men are mad. (40)

The gap between "most men" and "all men" furnishes the preface with some of its rhetorical momentum, but it is continually opening up only to be repeatedly and ultimately closed. The "little leave" that Burton requires is, besides the space of eighty pages, the licence to defend a proposition to which most men would not assent: a paradox. "Every man thinks with himself, Egomet videor mihi sanus, I am well, I am wise" (69), says Burton, quoting the third satire of Horace's second book, in which Damasippus maintains the same paradox that Burton sets himself. Burton recognizes the mind's tendency to suppose more wisdom in the world than actually exists and combats it by creating a tabula rasa from which all men's pretensions to sanity have been swept away. Humanity preserves an opinion of its own mental fitness by systematically excluding contrary opinions by the name of madness.

Burton turns this process inside-out: for him, madness is the inclusive category from which claims to wisdom are systematically excluded. Burton includes everyone in Bedlam, the place into which the mad are segregated from society, with its normative definition of man and presumption of his sanity.

Burton's defence of the proposition that the world is mad and melancholy is organized according to the structure of the world itself.

> you shall find that kingdoms and provinces are melancholy, cities and families, all creatures, vegetal, sensible, and rational, that all sorts, sects, ages, conditions, are out of tune. (39)

In place of the harmonious Renaissance cosmos ordered at every level according to reason and proportion, Burton presents a cosmic hierarchy of melancholy. He faithfully examines each level of its organization, although he permits himself to wander in considering the microcosm of man. Indeed, so free is his wandering and so impetuous the torrent of his words, that the sequence of his arguments is easily missed. It may therefore be helpful briefly to trace their course through the preface before investigating the particulars of Burton's satirical world-view.

From his position above the world, Burton begins by proving men mad in general terms. Adducing a wealth of Biblical and classical sentences, he shows that melancholy is "an inbred malady in every one of us" (46). Philosophers, because they embody the human aspiration to wisdom, are the object of special attack. Once more Burton evokes his station on high, by way of Lucian's Charon, and he amplifies Cyprian's vacillation between laughter and pity at the world

by reference to Democritus and Heraclitus. At this point he inserts "verbatim almost" Hippocrates' "Epistle to Damagetus". Democritus' harangue from his garden outside the walls of Abdera is yet another Menippean view-from-above.

The idea of what Democritus would observe and how he would react "were he now to travel, or could get leave of Pluto to come see fashions" (53) provides the link for the survey of modern "fashions" which follows. Burton's declamations on the madness of religious superstition, of war, of lawsuits, and of numerous other inversions of a sane and just social order climax in a series of images of "the world turned upside downward" (68). Next, again taking his cue from Cyprian and Lucian, Burton looks into the minds and hearts of men. He finds folly in men's presumption of their own sanity and of others' madness. Burton directly challenges his readers' self-esteem in this section, but he undermines his own authority to laugh at others just as effectively. An admission that he has wandered from his proposed scheme of cosmic hierarchy is succeeded by a series of "more special and evident arguments" (73) to prove the world mad (that are no more special than the preceding ones). Finally Burton arrives at "vegetals and sensibles" (79), i.e. plants and animals, a subject which does not long detain him.

The next topic Burton treats, the melancholy of kingdoms and provinces, includes his prescriptions for a Utopia and takes up fully one-third of his exposition of the world's madness. Burton's opinions on political, economic, and social matters, although brought to bear

throughout the Anatomy, are concentrated here. A general survey of melancholy political bodies finds particular fault with "tyrannizing princes" and "wrangling lawyers"(83). Burton's strictures are wide-ranging and his examples culled from all periods of world history; it is difficult to gauge the degree to which criticism of contemporary England is specifically intended. No such difficulty attends the succeeding portion of his argument, which concerns the melancholy of "this island" (86). Burton cites England's economic doldrums as the principal symptom of his country's melancholy, the causes of which he attributes to a failure to improve public works and to cultivate native industries. "Idleness is the malus genius of our nation" (88), he declares, pointing an accusing finger at the gentry and noting high levels of unemployment among labourers and seamen. Burton's criticisms were undoubtedly prompted by the economic recession that England experienced in the last decade of James I's reign, particularly 1620-1624, and have little relevance to modern Britain.

Burton shows himself an ambitious projector before concluding as a resigned moralist that "all must be as it is... there is no remedy" (97). His only recourse is to "make an Utopia of mine own" (97). The practical schemes he proposes in such detail, however, cannot wholly remove his awareness that his Utopia is based on the fallacy of human perfectibility. As Fish observes, melancholy has her shrine even in Utopia. Burton's digression to a poetical "noplace" is thus integrated into his satirical demonstration of the omnipresence of melancholy. The

imagination itself does not escape the general contagion.

Burton descends to the next level of social organisation to consider briefly the melancholy of families before resuming his former cursory survey of the "sorts and conditions of men" (109). Great men, philosophers (again), satirists, lovers, women, and covetous men are entered in the register of the mad. Burton concludes where he had begun, with the pronouncement that no man is free from melancholy. Apologies for his satire (that continue it under a different guise) and promises for a soberer treatise to follow (that will not strictly be kept) consume the remaining pages of the preface.

It should be evident from this synopsis that Burton's satirical argument is not merely a pretext on which to digress to any matter of interest but the thread that ties the preface together. Burton's opinions on politics and on such matters as the reform of inland waterways may be more or less successfully disengaged from their satirical matrix, but in themselves they are perhaps of no more interest than those of any other Jacobean Englishman conscious of his nation's ills. In his censure of wars, superstition, and tyranny, Burton displays the European perspective and characteristic concerns of the humanist reformers of the preceding century, particularly of Erasmus and More, but to different effect in a different time. The task Burton undertakes in the preface is not to reform the world (although he wishes it could be done) but to constitute the whole of it within the single universal category of melancholy. The movement of his

argument is therefore towards inclusion. The strategies of his satire must be examined with reference to this overriding objective.

Inclusion: Writer, Reader, Authors

A tactical problem immediately arises. If all are mad, it follows that neither Burton nor the many authors whom he cites in his support can be exempted from the general mania without disproving the very proposition they are attempting to demonstrate. Yet if Burton confesses himself mad and reveals his authors' fallibility (as he does) his argument is left without authority and risks being thought merely foolish. This circumstance either wholly invalidates it or carries it to a logically triumphant (if also absurd) conclusion. In either case, the logical circularity of Burton's argument is inescapable. Burton's wager is that he can persuade the reader to include himself and everyone else in the circle. He manoeuvres his fictus adversarius inside it by a calculated use of the second person pronoun, but recognizes at the same time that his rhetorical highhandedness may be taken by a sceptical reader as a further sign of his own foolish self-deception. His only recourse is to create and destroy another, more subtle fictive adversary. Whether or not his actual reader consents to seeing himself in Burton's "thou" is of course beyond Burton's control, no matter how expert his rhetorical tactics. Burton may never win the reader's confidence, as he claims to do, or extract from

him a private confession of madness, but if he has the reader's continuing attention, he has all the company he requires to justify his discourse. At last the reader becomes a fool for persisting in reading what he knows to be a piece of folly. This is the true point of complicity between Burton and his reader, and Burton does not fail to note it (in the short preface to the third partition): "If I have spent my time ill to write, let not them be so idle as to read" (III, 4). The reader either acknowledges himself Burton's fellow fool or incurs the charge of playing the hypocrite lecteur who keeps the Anatomy by his bedside and his folly in the closet.

Since he cannot conceal his foolishness, Burton exaggerates it in order to caricature what he fears may be the reader's perception of it: "I have overshot myself, I have spoken foolishly, rashly, unadvisedly, absurdly, I have anatomized mine own folly" (122). When Burton confesses his folly, he does so in such a way as to encourage the reader either to doubt his confession or to accept his authority as well. Burton quotes Horace and Petronius in the following passage, in which he turns to satire the satirist's conventional admission of fallibility:[114]

> If any man shall ask in the meantime, who I am that so boldly censure others, Tu nullane habes vitia? have I no faults? Yes, more than thou hast, whatsoever thou art. Nos numerus sumus, I confess it again, I am as foolish, as mad as anyone.

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114. v. James Tillman, "The Satirist Satirized: Burton's Democritus Jr.", Studies in the Literary Imagination X (1977), 89-96.

> Insanus vobis videor, non deprecor ipse,
> Quo minus insanus.
>
> I do not deny it, demens de populo dematur. My comfort is, I have more fellows, and those of excellent note. And though I be not so right or so discreet as I should be, yet not so mad, so bad neither, as thou perhaps takest me to be. (119-120)

Burton bargains away his own claim to sanity in return for a similar concession from his fellows. One feels that the vindication of his own condition motivates Burton to prove madness universal: "like Aesop's fox, when he had lost his tail, would have all his fellow foxes cut off theirs" (70). His efforts to be sane and to integrate himself into society having failed, he attempts to gather a universal brotherhood of madmen and melancholics. In company there is consolation. When, in Horace's Satire II, 3, the Stoic teacher Stertinius discovers Damasippus on the point of suicide, he addresses these words to him:

> pudor inquit te malus angit,
> insanos qui inter vereare insanus haberi.
> primum nam inquiram, quid sit furere; hoc si erit in te
> solo, nil verbi, pereas quin fortiter, addam (ll. 39-42)
>
> (You're afraid of being thought mad by people who are mad themselves!
> First let me ask you what madness is. If it proves to be something
> peculiar to you, I'll leave you free to die like a man.)

Stertinius' succeeding demonstration of the universality of madness is intended to reassure Damasippus that his misfortunes are not singular. Burton applies the same strategy of consolation to himself and to all the mad, including those who have become so in consequence of reading his preface. When he asks that all of humanity be carried to Bedlam "for company" (119), the madhouse verges on the phalanstery.

Democritus Jr. is both an isolated figure and a representative one. He represents the common nature of man placed in exceptional circumstances, at the point of madness, self-doubt, and death, of melancholy *in extremis*. At the same time as he stigmatizes himself as melancholy, he presents to those from whom he is cut off an image of the limits of their complacent, unselfconscious selves. Burton recognizes that melancholy marks all men for her own whether they acknowledge it or not. He knows that his readership is made up of individual melancholics whose cases are actually or potentially as acute as his own.

The combination of intellectual isolation from others and existential community with them is a common pattern in the characters of Menippean protagonists. Socrates, Lucius in the *Golden Ass*, Menippus in Lucian, and the Hippocratic Democritus as well as Democritus Jr., all exemplify it. The Renaissance melancholic internalizes this conflict emotionally; his heightened awareness of the self, of death, and of worldly vanity sets him apart from others, whose obliviousness to their fates he views with pathos. The humo/rist too (melancholy or not), that is, one whose humour is, as Coleridge says, fundamentally "disinterested", manifests a similar pattern at the level of character. As Dostoyevsky writes of the eccentric:

> [he] is not only 'not always' an exception and an isolated case, but on the contrary, it often happens that precisely he is the one who carries within himself the *marrow of the whole*.[115]

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115. Cited by Bahktin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p.125.

Every man, Burton complains, is "a law and example to himself" (70), but in being so, each is equally 'humourous' and equally obeys the common law of madness.

Burton recurs to the subject of his own madness in one of his several parting apologies for his satirical preface:

> And now methinks upon a sudden I am awaked as it were out of a dream; I have had a raving fit, a phantastical fit, ranged up and down, in and out. (122)

Burton's admission (real or feigned) that the preface has been produced in a fit of madness, for which there are numerous literary precedents,[116] is obviously intended to mock authorial deference as well as to display it. Even if Burton is not passing off the literal truth by a jest, his confession still offers a suggestive metaphorical description of the conditions under which he writes. Madness, dreaming, and fantasticality are all states in which the mind gives itself over to an order of existence not only free from the constraints of convention and consciousness but opposed to them. These aberrant states of mind furnish the structural and thematic materials for

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116. For example, Nicholas Breton in Pasquil's Mad-cappe, London, 1600, "To the Reader", confesses that "what I have written was in a madde humour". In Pasquil's Fooles-Cap, London, 1600, "To the Reader", he continues his conceit: "Mad-cap hath past one fit and now is fallen into another". Both of Breton's poems are satires. Burton owned Pasquil's Fooles-Cap. v. also supra., p. 3 on Nathaneal Carpenter's fit of melancholy in his Geography Delineated Forth (1625).

many Menippean plots. Burton's view-from-above may be thought of as a static version of the Menippean fantastic journey. The mad fit is a kind of ec-stasis, a standing outside of the body, a division of the self. By the logic of the menippea, man is most himself when he is alienated from himself and the world, when he confronts himself from the vantage of the limits of his being: when he anatomizes his own melancholy.

Having first invited his readers to "climb up to see" the world, and having surveyed its madness with them, by way of concluding his "general arguments" Burton turns his sights on himself and his fellow observers as observers. He collapses the distance between observer and observed by demonstrating that each man's perception of others' foolishness is relative to his mistaken presumption of his own sanity. "Every man thinks with himself... I am well, I am wise, and laughs at others" (69). The fool's part consists in thinking that he is not an actor but a privileged "spectator of the rest":

> Thus, not acknowledging our own errors and imperfections, we securely deride others, as if we alone were free, and spectators of the rest, accounting it an excellent thing, as indeed it is, aliena optimum frui insania, to make ourselves merry with other men's obliquities. (70)

That all men observe and deride follies in other men is precisely the point of likeness between men that makes folly universal: "we scoff and point one at another whenas in conclusion all are fools" (70). The effective collapse of distinctions between men undermines the

difference between personal pronouns:[117]

> We securely deride others... whenéas he himself is more faulty than the rest, mutato nomine, de te fabula narratur, he may take himself by the nose for a fool. (70)

We, he, te: grammatically, confusion reigns in this sentence, but logically, as Burton says in another context, "'tis all one". Burton subjects his pronouns to logical permutation:

> So thou laughest at me, and I at thee, both at a third; and he returns that of the poet upon us again, Hei mihi, insanire me aiunt, quum ipsi ultro insaniant. (71)

Laugher and laughed-at, spectator and actor are one, however they may presume to differ in the world below or distance themselves from the world by surveying it from a height. Burton no sooner derides those "spectators of the rest" who laugh at others' obliquities than he changes the course of his sentence ("We securely deride others... accounting it an excellent thing, as indeed it is") and commits the same obliquity himself.

If the sanity of the writer and the reader is discredited, what of Burton's hundreds of authors? Clearly, they are as liable to folly as anyone else. Conventionally, of course, one appeals to a third party in order to bolster an argument, and so Burton does. Because the argument he is bolstering is that all are mad, however, a patently absurd opinion taken from a supposed authority is as

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117. v. Fish, p. 313 on this point.

serviceable to him as one that appears to have the weight of good sense behind it. The very idea of authority, which is predicated on the differences between parties, is upset by Burton's argument. Burton directly subverts the words of his authors only occasionally, but when he does, he lets his reader see the limitations of the very process of argument from authority upon which the Anatomy so heavily relies.

> I must needs except Lipsius and the Pope, and expunge their name out of the catalogue of fools. For besides that parasitical testimony of Dousa ... Lipsius saith of himself, that he was humani generis quidam paedagogus voce et stylo, a grand signior, a master, a tutor of us all. (119)

The testimony of a parasite and a braggart ~~are~~ is authoritative only for an argument contrary to the one that their words support. Elsewhere Dousa and Lipsius are quoted as if their words were beyond reproach, which is to say only that elsewhere Burton's irony is less pointed.

Authority cannot inhere in words alone. It depends upon authors and, most importantly, upon some standard for authorizing them. Burton often appears tacitly to endorse the words he quotes and somewhat more emphatically to approve of certain authors, but he denies the principles of privilege and power which make the concept of authority meaningful. There can be no certain authority in a world where the wisdom that could confer it is attained by no one. The Stoic sage, for example, who might be expected to possess wisdom and authority, turns out to be a king only in his own conceit:

> "He never dotes, never mad, never sad, drunk, because virtue cannot be taken away," as Zeno holds, "by reason of strong apprehension," but he was mad to say so. (118)

Here Burton leaves no doubt as to the doubtful authority of Zeno (the quotation, actually taken from Lipsius, is nevertheless given in Latin in the margin: the space conventionally set aside in scholarly works as the repository of authority is made to harbour madness in disguise). More often Burton witholds the damning "but he was mad to say so", and the reader is left to decide for himself what weight to give an author's words, just as he must judge of Burton's own. The immediate context may suggest how far a particular citation of opinion may be relied upon to prop up a particular point, but in the greater context of Burton's argument, all authority is equally without foundation. Only an author for whom authority had lost its meaning could quote authors in the numbers that Burton does, frequently on opposing sides of the same question.

Unsupported by any structure of authority, the Anatomy might be expected to collapse. Instead, it stands unshakably, for in Burton's universe there exists no principle of gravity to pull it down. Fish writes:

> in the absence of an independent center of authority, that is of exception, the private and eccentric visions that fill the book become the norm and subjectivity becomes objectivity, for that is all there is; and by the same reasoning, if there is nothing but madness and melancholy, whatever mad and melancholy men say is necessarily true.[118]

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118. ibid., pp. 330-31.

"Necessarily true", that is, where truth cannot be distinguished from nonsense. Burton appeals to his readers to 'authorize' his conclusions:

> say, at a word, are they fools? I refer it to you, though you be likewise fools and madmen yourselves, and I as mad to ask the question; for what said our comical Mercury?
>
> Justum ab injustis petere insipientia est.
>
> I'll stand to your censure yet, what think you? (72)

Judge and jury are manifestly unfit to pass judgment on mankind, but that is no deterrent to their doing so. The verdict has already been pronounced, as in Lewis Carroll's court scenes; the trial of Burton's preface takes place in Bedlam. One last example may serve to epitomize Burton's technique of nonsense argument.

> Fabatus, an Italian, holds seafaring men all mad; "the ship is mad, for it never stands still; the mariners are mad, to expose themselves to such imminent dangers: the waters are raging mad, in perpetual motion; the winds are as mad as the rest, they know not whence they come, whither they would go: and those men are maddest of all that go to sea; for one fool at home, they find forty abroad." He was a madman that said it, and thou peradventure as mad to read it. (116)

Significantly, this miniature anatomy of madness attributed to Fabatus is quoted (as Burton notes) from Gaspar Ens' book on the theme of universal folly, Μωροσοφία.[119] Morosophers[120] is what authors are for Burton, wise only

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119. Gaspar Ens, Morosophia, Cologne, 1620. Burton quotes from pp. 258-59.

120. This word, literally 'foolish-wise-men', was borrowed from Lucian (Alexander 40, in Works [Loeb] IV, 226) by Erasmus (Moriae Encomium, ed. Kan, p.7), and also used by Rabelais (Tiers Livre, ed. cit., p.309).

to the degree that wisdom is understood to include folly. Sapientia and insipientia inhere in every utterance in the Anatomy, Burton's, his authors', or his fictive readers'.

Inclusion: Melancholy and Wisdom

Burton's strategy of inclusion determines not only his treatment of persons and sources but his understanding of melancholy itself.

> So that, take melancholy in what sense you will, properly or improperly, in disposition or in habit, for pleasure or for pain, dotage, discontent, fear, sorrow, madness, for part or all, truly or metaphorically, 'tis all one. (40)
>
> Folly, melancholy, and madness is but one disease, delirium is a common name to all. (39)

This notion of disease constitutes a paradox more technical than but closely related to the central paradox of the preface (that the world is mad). That folly, melancholy, and madness do not differ in kind controverts the received opinion of Renaissance medical theory, that of moral philosophy, and that of common sense. Burton marshalls five medical authorities in support of the proposition that melancholy and madness differ only in degree, but in the body of the Anatomy he makes pretence of subscribing to the more orthodox position that they may be distinguished in kind from each other and from other morbi interni such as frenzy, dotage, and lycanthropy. In the preface, however, Burton claims liberties that he will deny himself (or rather, claim to deny himself) in his treatise proper.

One will study Renaissance medical books and the criteria of internment in madhouses in vain for an explanation for Burton's willingness to confound the species of delirium in the preface.[121] A substantial, predominantly classical philosophical and literary tradition will, however, be found to lie behind Burton's stance. It is rooted in the Cynic and Stoic division of the world into two classes of men, the wise and the foolish. Only the sage was considered sane by the Cynics and early Stoics; the rest of mankind was held to suffer from various mental and moral aberrations the degree and kind of which mattered little to philosophies that postulated only two mutually exclusive states of the soul. The fourth, fifth, and sixth of the Stoic paradoxes, as collected by Cicero in the Paradoxa Stoicorum, reflect this uncompromising scheme. These three paradoxes maintain, respectively, that only the sage is wise and that all fools are mad; that only the sage is free and that all fools are slaves; that only the sage is rich. Literary development of the Cynic and Stoic philosophy antedated the formulation of the Stoic paradoxes, but the paradoxes themselves form the intellectual backbone of satires by Varro, Horace, and Persius, and are frequently mentioned by Lucian.[122] Even Cicero demonstrated the

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121. Such an explanation is advanced by Robert A. Kinsman, "Folly, Melancholy, and Madness: A Study in Shifting Styles of Medical Analysis and Treatment, 1450-1675", in The Darker Vision of the Renaissance, ed. Robert A. Kinsman, Berkeley, 1974, 273-320.

122. v. David Sigsbee, "The Paradoxa Stoicorum in Varro's Menippeans", Classical Philology 71 (1976), 244-48.

satirical turn that an exposition of them could be given. Use of the Stoic paradoxes in satire does not necessarily imply philosophic acceptance of them. On the contrary, the classical satirists present the moral absolutism of the paradoxes and their glorification of the sage at ironic distance, even as they employ them to explore the nature of human folly.

Burton himself invites the reader to compare his satire with similar treatment of its themes by Horace and Cicero. His formula of folly is an adaptation of the fourth of Cicero's Stoic paradoxes. "'Twas an old Stoical paradox, omnes stultos insanire" (39), states Burton, referring the reader to its exposition by Damasippus in Horace's Satires (II, 3) and by Cicero in the Tusculan Disputations (II, 5). This satire of Horace, the most ambitious classical handling of any of the Stoic paradoxes, is among the most important literary precedents for Burton's preface. Burton quotes from it on nineteen separate occasions during the course of his proof of the world's madness. Many of his quotations come as he takes up some fresh topic, although he appears only to be recalling, not following Horace. Burton does not set out in the preface to give a formal or even an informal defence of any of the Stoic paradoxes, but as he himself recognizes, the strategy of his satire leads him to adopt rhetorical and philosophical positions closely in line with classical treatments of them.

The sharp contrast between wisdom and folly stipulated in Burton's preface is produced not only by his deliberate

merging of the varieties of delirium but by his refinement and isolation of the concept of wisdom. Like Horace, Burton elevates wisdom chiefly to undermine the pretensions of those who presume to possess it. For all his calling upon it, Burton concedes that wisdom is a mere name:

> We may peradventure usurp the name, or attribute it to others for favour, as Carolus Sapiens, Philippus Bonus, Lodovicus Pius, etc., and describe the properties of a wise man, as Tully doth an orator, Xenophon Cyrus, Castilio a courtier, Galen temperament, an aristocracy is described by politicians. But where shall such a man be found? (76)

The only man to possess the properties of a wise man turns out to be no man at all, but a name:

> Whom shall I then except? Ulricus Huttenus' Nemo; nam, Nemo omnibus horis sapit, Nemo nascitur sine vitiis, Crimine Nemo caret, Nemo sorte sua vivit contentus, Nemo in amore sapit, Nemo bonus, Nemo sapiens, Nemo est omne parte beatus [Nobody; for Nobody is wise at all hours, Nobody is born without faults, Nobody is free from blame, Nobody lives content with his own lot, Nobody is wise in love, Nobody is good, Nobody is wise, Nobody is altogether happy] etc., and therefore Nicholas Nemo, or Monsieur Nobody shall go free. (117)

The figure of Nemo, the creation of medieval Latin satire, represents for Hutten and Burton "a foil for the follies of mankind - a mirror of perfection reflecting nothing."[123] He is Burton's substitute for the all-powerful (but chimerical) Stoic sage of Roman satire. The wise man

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123. Gerta Calmann, "The Picture of Nobody: An Iconographic Study", Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes XXIII (1960), 60-104, p.93.

exists for Burton only by a trick of language.

In the guise of the sage, the phantom of Nobody haunts Burton's preface. In the following passage, the wise man appears and disappears:

> How would our Democritus have been affected to see a wicked caitiff, or "fool, a very idiot, a funge, a golden ass, a monster of men, to have many good men, wise men, learned men to attend upon him with all submission, as an appendix to his riches, for that respect alone, because he hath more wealth and money, and to honour him with divine titles and bombast epithets," to smother him with fumes and eulogies, whom they know to be a dizzard, a fool, a covetous wretch, a beast etc., "because he is rich"! (62)

The principal thrust of Burton's satire is directed against the rich fool, but the "good men, wise men, learned men" who attend him for financial reward betray their greed and their folly by their hypocritical fawning. Any doubt that Burton's satire cuts two ways is dispelled by the marginal notes to this passage. Burton is quoting More's Utopia:

> Eorumque detestantur Utopienses insaniam, qui divinos honores iis impendunt, quos sordidos et avaros agnoscunt; non alio respectu honorantes, quam quod dites sint. (62)

'The Utopians detest the insanity of those who bestow divine honours upon those whom they know to be covetous and low-minded'. Burton's so-called wise men do not escape worldliness and madness. Burton conjures up the existence of the wise and good only to show that their supposed wisdom is flawed and therefore, according to Burton's strict scheme, no wisdom at all.

Another passage may illustrate a different application of this same process.[124] Burton argues that, on the one hand, we mistakenly hold those in positions of authority to be wise, "And on the other, so corrupt is our judgment, we esteem wise and honest men fools" (41). He gives examples:

> David was derided of the common people (Ps. lxxi, 6): "I am become a monster to many." And generally we are accounted fools for Christ (I Cor. iv, 10). "We fools thought his life madness, and his end without honour" (Wisd. v, 4). (41)

The contrast between the "we" who are fools <u>for</u> Christ (i.e. as his followers, as wise and honest men) and the "we fools" who through corrupt judgment "thought his life madness" is so unemphatically made as almost to vanish. Furthermore, even fools for Christ are fools of a sort. Burton seems to suggest not that some folly is perfect wisdom but that all folly, by whomever it may be approved or redeemed, participates in the foolish course of human life: "And they that teach wisdom, patience, meekness, are the veriest dizzards, hair-brains, and most discontent" (111). Despite his apparent zeal to distinguish between them, the wise and the foolish are even harder to part as Burton continues:

> 'Tis an ordinary thing with us to account honest, devout, orthodox, divine, religious, plain-dealing men idiots, asses that cannot or will not lie and dissemble, shift, flatter... that cannot temporize as other men do, hand and take bribes, etc., but fear God, and make a conscience of their doings. But the Holy Ghost, that knows better how to judge, He calls them fools. (42)

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124. Cf. Fish, p. 320, for another reading of this passage.

Without clear antecedents, the use of "we" and "us" in these two passages is equivocal. Burton appears to be making distinctions, but he uses these pronouns as if he intended to include everybody by them. When the Holy Ghost "calls them fools", the antecedent of "them" is not easily identifiable, although everything depends upon its being found. To preserve the train of reasoning, the antecedent of "them" must be "other men" (or even "us), but the syntactically much stronger noun is "plain-dealing men". Burton's essential distinction is in danger of total collapse. Righteous indignation at dissemblers and temporizers (doubtless born of Burton's own experience) is curiously balanced by backhanded jeering at those (the writer presumably among them) whose very unworldliness is another form of worldly folly.

If the category of wisdom is a null set, then that of folly (by whatever name) is a universal one. What matters is not the sense in which folly (or melancholy, madness, delirium, dotage, frenzy, etc.) is taken, but that it is taken to apply to the whole of the world or to the human condition in its entirety. "'All our actions', as Pliny told Trajan, 'upbraid us of folly', our whole course of life is but matter of laughter" (45). Man's "whole course of life" is his "one disease". Kinds of behaviour conventionally distinguished are brought together in Burton's preface under the common heading of mental illness. Sin, for example, is made tributary to folly: "'Fools' (saith David) 'by reason of their transgressions'" (74). Vices too are brought to a par with other forms and degrees of folly and madness:

> Josephus the historian taxeth his countrymen Jews for bragging of their vices, publishing their follies, and that they did contend amongst themselves who should be most notorious in villainies; but we flow higher in madness, far beyond them,
>
> Mox daturi progeniem vitiosiorem
>
> ... as Petrarch observes, we change language, habits, laws, customs, manners, but not vices, not diseases, not the symptoms of folly and madness, they are still the same. (53)

With the Stoics, Burton holds that all passions, regardless of their degree, are equivalent to madness: "Seneca and the rest of the Stoics are of the opinion that, where there is any the least perturbation, wisdom may not be found" (75). Burton draws no line between men who are touched by the "least perturbation" and those who are "carried away with passion, discontent, lust, pleasures, etc." (74). Some fools are madder than others, Burton once remarks, but his use of the comparative is meaningless when all degrees of folly and madness fall short of wisdom. Although Burton wilfully distorts the medical concept of melancholy in the preface ("properly or improperly... truly or metaphorically ..."), he does not have to stretch it altogether out of shape to make it fit the traditional Stoic and satirical types of folly. The "passions and perturbations of the mind" (the emotions or affects) had lent themselves to combined moral and medical discourse since their categorization by Galen as one of the six non-natural causes of disease.

Renaissance revaluations of folly and melancholy

offered Burton the opportunity to spare some kinds of both conditions from inclusion among the signs of disease, but he pointedly refuses to make any such exceptions. He does not distinguish, as Erasmus does in the Praise of Folly, a malign from a benevolent folly. Horace's "amabilis insania et mentis gratissimus error", recalled by Erasmus in his defence of the kind of self-deception that frees the mind from cares, is quoted and ridiculed by Burton in the form of the obstinacy of the misguided (71-72). Burton does not make a degree of folly a precondition of wisdom or allow a mingling of the two, as for example Gaspar Ens does in his Μωροσοφία, a book heavily indebted to Erasmus. The Christian folly described by Saint Paul, preached by the evangelical humanists, and praised by Folly is not a possibility in Burton's world. Burton gives Pauline folly its due, connecting it, like Erasmus, with Platonic divine furor, but he mentions it only to dismiss it:

> I may not deny but that there is some folly approved, a divine fury, a holy madness, even a spiritual drunkenness in the saints of God themselves; sanctam insaniam Bernard calls it... familiar to good men, as that of Paul (2 Cor.), "he was a fool", etc., and (Rom. ix) he wisheth himself "to be anathematized for them." Such is that drunkeness which Ficino speaks of, when the soul is elevated and ravished with a divine taste of that heavenly nectar, which poets deciphered by the sacrifice of Dionysus; and in this sense, with the poet, insanire lubet, as Austin exhorts us, ad ebrietatem se quisque paret, let's all be mad and drunk. But we commonly mistake and go beyond our commission, we reel to the opposite part, we are not capable of it, and as he said of the Greeks, Vos Graeci semper pueri, vos Britanni, Galli, Germani, Itali, etc., you are a company of fools. (77-78)

Although "familiar to good men", in a world where there is

"none good" (76), this holy madness cannot be attained. The "we" of "we are not capable of it" is all-inclusive (significantly, the phrase is quoted from Augustine, whose exhortation to spiritual drunkenness is thus brought to nothing). The paragraph ends with a reconstitution of the universal company of fools, and sanctam insaniam is disposed of. Aristotelian melancholy fares no better. Although Burton discusses it intelligently in his treatise proper, in the preface he alludes to Aristotle's conception of melancholy as the temperament of exceptional men only jocosely. He quotes Aristotle's aphorism (reported by Seneca) "Nullum magnum ingenium sine mixtura dementiae"[125] and twists its meaning in his paraphrase: "they have a worm as well as others" (111).

Paradox: Language and Vision

It is evident from the tenor of his arguments that Burton's aim in the preface is not to present a reasoned analysis of human folly but to overwhelm through a super-

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125. This sentence, though not to be found anywhere in Aristotle's known works is usually taken as a reference to the theories of Problem XXX, I. It is not, however, an accurate summary of Aristotle's argument there about the relation of genius and mental disease. See Klibansky, Saxl, and Panofsky, Saturn and Melancholy, p. 29. Burton quotes Aristotle's aphorism in his discussion of "witty melancholy" in his treatise proper (I, 422).

abundance of epithet and example:

> what's the world itself? A vast chaos, a confusion of manners, as fickle as the air, domicilium insanorum, a turbulent troop full of impurities, a mart of walking spirits, goblins, the theatre of hypocrisy, a shop of knavery, flattery, a nursery of villainy, the scene of babbling, the school of giddiness, the academy of vice. (64)

Burton seems to foment this chaos by the vehemence and turbulence of his own representation of it. Wordplay and wilfull sophism colour the entire preface and its picture of folly. After proving with the aid of Copernicus and Kepler that the earth is a moon and therefore peopled by lunatics, Burton pronounces: "I could produce such arguments till dark night" (78). Such arguments suit the upside-down decorum of paradox. Burton argues on behalf of the proposition that the world is mad with the same licence with which Panurge praises debts and debtors or Donne the French pox. If Burton's arguments are not sensible in a conventional way, neither, however, are they simply ludicrous; the thrust of Burton's paradox (and of all Menippean paradox) is to deny that sense and nonsense can be distinguished and that arguments can be unequivocal. The words of paradox are not committed to a single sense; their irony does not point in a single direction. A disposition to purely verbal argument is the consequence of the detachment of paradox from univocal meaning. Released from the bonds of common usage, the words of paradox take on a certain autonomy. In large part, Burton's preface consists simply in attaching to the world the names of melancholy and its synonyms (including, as we have seen, the empty name of wisdom). Burton's "confessions,

testimonies, arguments" often amount to little more than an exercise in name-calling. Whether applied to the whole of the world or to its parts in virtue of the character of the whole, Burton's names display the ambivalence that inheres in all universal, paradoxical uses of language. Language so used fuses praise and abuse.[126] Folly, melancholy, and madness are, of course, terms by which Burton openly reproves the world for its condition. Only a reader resolutely determined to make conventional sense out of Burton's preface, however, would find them, with Simon, expressions of a "gravité moralisatrice";[127] or, on the other side, with Colie, would construe the Anatomy as "a praise of folly".[128]

Neither praise nor abuse but a failure of each to exclude the other expresses Burton's meaning in the preface. In order to demonstrate the madness of philosophers, Burton first assembles a long train of bombastic titles that have been spoken in praise of them ("... lights of nature, giants for wit, quintessence of wit, divine spirits, eagles in the clouds, fallen from heaven, gods, spirits, lamps of the world..."); then he switches to labels of blame ("not eagles, but kites; novices, illiterate, eunuchi sapientiae")

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126. y. Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, pp. 426 ff.

127. Simon, Robert Burton, p. 130.

128. Colie, Paradoxia Epidemica, p. 458.

and sides with Lactantius, who "in his book of Wisdom, proves them to be dizzards, fools, asses, madmen..." (43). There follows a listing of epithets abusive chiefly of Socrates, drawn from various authors. The particulars of Lactantius' proof and the evidence for Socrates' dotage are not cited, only the terms of abuse and their sources. Burton's titles of praise are obviously ironic (Burton himself calls them "hyperbolical elogiums"), and his words of blame, while not intended to convey ironic praise, are themselves ridiculously exaggerated. If the title of his book ("his book of Wisdom") were not enough to discredit Lactantius and the point of view he champions, his opinion that Plato and Aristippus differ from brute beasts only in that "they could speak" exposes his folly. The defamation of the Greek philosophers is to be taken with as little seriousness as their glorification. Burton's indiscriminate name-calling undoes the meaning of the names he applies and leaves only laughter, the affective expression of an ambivalence that language cannot directly express.

If Burton's universal perspective destroys the seriousness and fixity of language, it also operates to similar effect on the conventional view of man's life. Paradox is the rhetorical equivalent of the view-from-above. Burton's riot of names and his frequently contrived arguments compose a uniform, but ambivalent vision of the world of men. As I have previously remarked, Burton himself presents his satire in terms of vision, from his initial assumption of mountaintop vantage onward through the long pageant of scenes

that complete the clause "What would Democritus have said to see..." (55).

> to see, hear, and read so many bloody battles, so many thousands slain at once, such streams of blood able to turn mills... (55)
>
> To see so much difference betwixt words and deeds, so many parasangs betwixt tongue and heart, men like stage players act variety of parts. (66)
>
> To see a man roll himself up like a snowball, from base beggary to right worshipful and right honourable titles, unjustly to screw himself into honours and offices; another to starve his genius, damn his soul to gather wealth, which he shall not enjoy, which his prodigal son melts and consumes in an instant. (67)

Burton's voice becomes increasingly exclamatory and his syntactic structures barer as he moves toward a conclusion to this series of infinitives and objects. The last and summary vision is:

> To see horses ride in a coach, men draw it; dogs devour their masters; towers build masons; children rule; old men go to school; women wear the breeches; sheep demolish towns, devour men, etc.; and in a word, the world turned upside downward! O viveret Democritus! (68)

For the hunter after topoi, Burton's preface is a Land of Cockaigne.[129] Its riches lie not only in full view but

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129. See Curtius, European Literature, pp. 94-98, on the topos of the world upside-down. The subject of the world upside-down is closely related to topics such as misrule and inversionary laughter and has a social as well as a literary dimension. v. Keith Thomas, "The Place of Laughter in Tudor and Stuart England", TLS, Jan. 21, 1977, pp. 77-81; Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Reasons of Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth-Century France", Past and Present 50 (1971), 41-75; C.L. Barber, Shakespeare's Festive Comedy, Princeton, 1959; Ian Donaldson, The World Turned Upside-Down: Comedy from Jonson to Fielding, Oxford, 1970; Christopher Hill, The World Turned Upside Downward: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution, London, 1972.

carry their own identification and footnotes. The pictures of the world upside-down which Burton presents are probably not of his own imagining, although "towers build masons" has the character of a Burtonian burlesque. "Sheep devour men" is footnoted to a passage in Utopia in which More describes the economic consequences of enclosing common land for grazing. The rest of Burton's pictures are proverbial and may be found in contemporary illustrated collections on the theme of the world upside-down.[130]

If the Anatomy's vision of the world had to be reduced to simplest terms, they would be "in a word, the world turned upside downward". The simplicity and confidence of Burton's presentation of the world upside-down are, however, deceptive. The climax to pages in which scenes of mayhem, fraud, hypocrisy, and injustice are depicted has an undeniably playful character. What purports to be a recitation of contemporary abuses resolves itself into a string of proverbs that compose a timeless world of inversionary fantasy. Merely "to see" the world is to have no certain relation to it. Detached from their objects, sight and language turn inward; the world upside-down becomes a looking-glass world, and a literary topos replaces Stuart England.

Burton's succession of infinitives culminates in a subjunctive: "O viveret Democritus" ('Would that Democritus

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130. v. Giuseppe Cochiarra, Il Mondo alla Rovescia, Turin, 1963.

were alive'). The reader may ask, with Burton (and Lucian, from whom the question is quoted), "what dost thou think Democritus would have done, had he been spectator of these things?" (55). Burton leaves Democritus, himself, and his reader room to be of two minds about the spectacle of a world given over to folly and madness. Democritus is fetched out of Hades to laugh at the modern world:

> Many additions, much increase of madness, folly, vanity, should Democritus observe, were he now to travel, or could get leave of Pluto to come see fashions, as Charon did in Lucian, to visit our cities of Moronia Pia and Moronia Felix: sure I think he would break the rim of his belly with laughing. Si foret in terris rideret Democritus seu, etc. (53)
>
> Olim jure quidem, nunc plus, Democrite, ride;
> Quin rides? vita haec nunc mage ridicula est.
>
> Democritus did well to laugh of old,
> Good cause he had, but now much more;
> This life of ours is more ridiculous
> Than that of his, or long before. (52)

Yet the madness of war leads Burton to frame the question from Lucian another way:

> Would this, think you, have enforced our Democritus to laughter, or rather made him turn his tune, alter his tone, and weep with Heraclitus, or rather howl, roar, and tear his hair in commiseration, stand amazed; or as the poets feign, that Niobe was for grief quite stupefied, and turned to a stone? (59)

Later, in regard to "cuckold's horns, forgeries of alchemists, the philosopher's stone, new projectors, etc., and all those works of darkness, foolish vows, hopes, fears, and wishes", Burton exclaims "what a deal of laughter would it have afforded!" (69). Yet at the thought of listening with Icaromenippus to other wishes ("one prays for rain, another

for fair weather; one for his wife's, another for his father's death, etc."), Burton cries out "how would [Democritus] have been confounded!" (69).

A reader may likewise find himself confounded. Burton appears to invite him to laugh and lament not only by turns but at the same time. Although some human actions afford Burton amusement and others provoke him to outrage or commiseration, Burton is concerned in the preface not to differentiate behaviour but to reduce it under one general heading. The response he makes to the world and asks from the reader ought to be correspondingly general. Yet, whether because he cannot reconcile his mixed feelings or whether because all universal views must be two-sided, Burton remains divided. He either represents Democritus as "confounded" in himself or pairs him with Heraclitus, as in the short Latin poem which he appended to the preface in his fourth edition; or, lastly, the laughter of the preface is itself ambivalent or self-reflexive, as demonstrated above.[131] "O viveret Democritus": where Burton might provide a final word, he breaks off, leaving his question unanswered. His ellipsis implies Democritus' laughter, but not a last laugh. Had Democritus been spectator of these things, he would -- the only certain answer is that (as Democritus Jr.) he would write the preface to an Anatomy of Melancholy and leave the same point unresolved.

Although it is possible, and to a degree necessary, to speak of the folly of the preface as a name rather than as

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131. v. supra, pp. 217-19.

a condition, it is also true that not all names warrant application to the whole course of man's life and that the ambivalence of Burton's reaction to the world of folly proceeds from something in the nature of folly itself. The subjects of Menippean paradox of themselves destroy the doxa of life, the illusions by which men limit their self-understanding, or in which men's inability to understand themselves finds expression. Erasmus' Folly, Burton's melancholy, Swift's madness, Pope's dulness, Montaigne's ignorance, and Rochester's Nothing are bound up with the ultimate origins and ends of man's being and with man's inability to know them or to act upon what knowledge of them he has.[132] Along with certain other subjects universally applied to man's life (debt in Rabelais, gout in Pirckheimer's Podagrae Laus), they all show to man a side of himself other than that which self-love or the prevailing intellectual fashion encourage him to adopt.

In one respect, Burton's preface is directed against man's philosophical pride. Man's folly is his defect of self-knowledge, as Burton points up in his version of the "Epistle to Damagetus". Superstition, love of commodity, and pursuit of ambition are all in essence philosophical faults. The figure who epitomizes man's blindness and presumption is thus the self-proclaimed wise man, against whose many shapes, from the reader confident of his own sanity to the Stoic sage, Burton directs his satire.

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132. v. Emrys Jones, "Pope and Dulness", Proceedings of the British Academy LIV (1968), 231-63, esp. 237, and supra, p.132.

Burton's preface may be seen as a variation of the ancient comic plot in which the braggart (the alazon) is uncrowned by the fool (the eiron). This perennial plot of satire is given a certain topicality in Burton's pages by the excesses of sixteenth-century Christian Stoicism, which proclaimed the sage an equal of God, but the impulse to overstep the limits of nature is presented as common to all men ("they swell in this life as if they were immortal, and demi-gods, for want of understanding" [50]). Insofar as Burton's preface conducts an exposure of man's "want of understanding", the revelation of man's folly takes on a moral character, though not a grave one. The stripping away of false pretences is a comic action, and the triumph of the fool is potentially ambivalent. The fool, as Bakhtin says, is king of the world upside-down,[133] and not merely Burton, but the fool in every man, triumphs over false wisdom in the preface.

At the same time as he presents man's philosophical error as a moral fault, Burton also shows that it is a fault incident to man's nature, thus vitiating the force behind his reproof. "Primaque lux vitae prima erroris erat" (47n): man's very existence involves him in illusion. Moral criticism is reduced to reckoning the degree of man's deviance from an unattainable wisdom; but the existence of such degrees of error is what Burton's paradox sets out to deny. Man is not reproved solely for his vicious

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133. Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, passim.

passions but for having passions at all: in effect, for not being a god instead of merely for thinking he is one. Burton interrupts his survey of human warfare to exclaim:

> How may Nature expostulate with mankind, Ego te divinum animal finxi, etc., I made thee an harmless, quiet, a divine creature! how many God expostulate, and all good men! (57)

Here Burton is condemning men for their "lust and spleen"; elsewhere he condemns them for denying that they are subject to such passions. Burton appears to present human folly as the perversion of reason and moral rectitude, yet he also appears to say that man is innately foolish, vain, and erring. Man has a double nature, that of a divine and that of a wretched animal. Burton evokes these contraries in moral terms, but does not sustain his own distinctions. The world in its right state exists in Burton's preface only in the design of God or in the imagination of (foolish) men.

If the world upside-down is the scene of human perversity, it is also that of all human activity; if that of mankind's disease, also that of his life. Whatever discontent man may suffer or fault he may commit cannot suppress his irrational vitality; indeed, his faults are the very expressions of his liveliness. All human behaviour takes on the cast of play in Burton's preface.

> For now, as Sarisburiensis said in his time, totus mundus histrionem agit, the whole world plays the fool; we have a new theatre, a new scene, a new Comedy of Errors, a new company of personate actors. (52)

Folly is not absolutely opposed to wisdom, only to non-being, to the end of the play. Burton's removed vantage reveals the whole world as worldly, as upside-down. Simply

by virtue of their inhabiting it, men are "giddy, vertiginous and lunatic within this sublunary maze" (78). If in one respect this giddiness is caused by the wavering of the world and the instability of man's estate, in another it is induced by the view-from-above that Burton invites his reader to share with him. Man is giddy by nature and through knowledge of his nature; he reels through Burton's preface caught between illness and elation.

Although Burton makes none of the available Renaissance apologies for folly or melancholy in his preface, the ambivalence with which his vision of the world is imbued owes as much to the Renaissance revaluation of folly as to the revival of Menippean satire and the techniques of paradox. The subject of the Renaissance treatment of folly is a vast one that has benefited from a recent surge in scholarly interest.[134] It has been generally agreed that towards the close of the fifteenth century European attitudes to folly underwent a significant change. The view of folly

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134. Michel Foucault's Histoire de la Folie a l'Age Classique, Paris, 1961 (second edition revised 1972), while primarily an historical study, treats the sixteenth-century literature of folly in a chapter entitled "Stultifera Navis". Among general studies of folly of a literary orientation are; Walter Kaiser, Praisers of Folly, London, 1964; Joel Lefebvre, Les Fols et La Folie, Paris, 1968; Gunter Hess, Deutsch-Lateinische Narrenzunft, Munich, 1971; the symposium volumes L'Umanesimo e "La Follia", ed. Enrico Castelli, Rome, 1971, and Folie et Déraison à la Renaissance, ed. Alois Gerlo, Brussels, 1976; and the excellent article by Robert Klein, "Le Theme du Fou et l'Ironie Humaniste", l'Archivio di Filosofia 3 (1963), 11-25.

as a vice unnatural to man gave way to a conception of folly as an intrinsic part of human nature. The different perspectives on folly in Sebastian Brandt's Narrenschiff (1494) and Erasmus' Praise of Folly (1509) and between the paintings of Bosch and Brueghel are often cited to illustrate this change. Brandt's fools are deviants, Erasmus' 'naturals'; Brandt makes one hundred and thirteen kinds of fools, Erasmus makes folly universal; Brandt condemns folly outright, while Erasmus gives it two sides and is able to praise it with and without irony. Bosch's tableaux of folly are lessons in morality; Brueghel's are philosophic reflections on the world upside-down.[135] The most positive Renaissance version of folly, that of the divinely inspired fool, was introduced into literature by Erasmus and Rabelais from Biblical and Platonic sources.[136] The holy fool, however, must be distinguished from the figure of the self-loving, erring everyman, whose folly removes him from God, though it does not deliver him to the devil. Burton's preface, in which a particular disease or condition is made a universal one, recapitulates the central Renaissance intellectual development of folly while shying away from the "holy madness" (as he calls it) that sometimes attended it. The theme of mass folly and the description of the

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135. v. Charles de Tolnay, Bruegel, Brussels, 1935, pp. 18-24.

136. See Kaiser, op.cit., and M.A. Screech, "Folie Erasmienne et Folie Rabelaisienne", in Colloquia Erasmiana Turonensia, ed. J.-C. Margolin, Paris, 1972, I, 441-52.

world of fools have a currency in sixteenth and early seventeenth-century European literature wider than the single English example of Burton's preface would suggest.[137]

Reform and Utopia

If the immediate aim of the preface is to prove that the world is mad, Burton's underlying purpose is to show that it "needs to be reformed", that "the highest to the lowest have need of physic" (39). Although Burton advertises cure and reformation as the task of his "following discourse" (the treatise proper), he considers in general terms the possibility of eradicating folly, melancholy, and madness in the preface itself. To reform the world, however, Burton would have to renounce the vision of it that the preface so uncompromisingly presents. He makes a show of doing so near the end of the preface as he passes (ostensibly) from satire to a sober preview of his treatise, but at the same time he confirms what he has already proved, that to put the world together again is beyond the skill of physic.

Burton's repeated assertions in the preface that human nature cannot be altered do not prevent him from raising the possibility of a general reformation of the world at the

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137. See, for example, Martine Bigeard, La Folie et les Fous Littéraires en Espagne 1500-1650, Paris, 1972, and K.G. Knight, "Seventeenth-Century Views of Human Folly", in Essays in German Literature, ed. F. Norman, London, 1965, 52-71.

conclusion of his discussion of the melancholy of kingdoms and provinces. From laws to heroes, Burton sets forth the agencies of reform with one hand and points to their inefficacy with the other.

> We have good laws, I deny not, to rectify such enormities, and so in all other countries, but it seems not always to good purpose. We had need of some general visitor in our age, that should reform what is amiss; a just army of Rosy-cross men, for they will amend all matters (they say), religion, policy, manners, with arts, sciences, etc.; Augeae stabulum purgare, to subdue tyrants, as he did Diomedes and Busiris: to expel thieves... to vindicate poor captives... to pass the torrid zone, the deserts of Libya, and purge the world of monsters and Centaurs: or another Theban Crates to reform our manners, to compose quarrels and controversies, as in his time he did, and was therefore adored for a god in Athens. (96)

Burton's "good laws" are "not always to good purpose". The "just army of Rosy-Cross men" he desires disappears when he refers the rumour of their coming to its source (the Rosy-Cross men themselves). Attila seems a poor choice for a reformer who must "reduce those wandering Tartars in order" (96), and Hercules was known for his madness as well as for his labours ("monster-conquering Hercules, that subdued the world and helped others, could not relieve himself in this, but mad he was at last" [117]). Although Burton notes that Crates was "adored for a god in Athens" (itself equivocal praise), he later includes him with the Rosicrucians among the pretenders to wisdom who are excepted from folly in the train of Monsieur Nobody.

The programme of worldwide reform that Burton would assign his "general visitor" inevitably runs foul of reality. Burton concludes his catalogue of desiderata by admitting

defeat:

> But as L. Licinius taxed Timolaus, you may us. These are vain, absurd, and ridiculous wishes not to be hoped: all must be as it is, Boccalinus may cite commonwealths to come before Apollo, and seek to reform the world itself by commissioners, but there is no remedy, it may not be redressed, desinent homines tum demum stultescere quando esse desinent, so long as they can wag their beards, they will play the knaves and fools. (97)

This period appears to put an end to vain wishes for reform, but Burton's next paragraph opens onto new mirages.

> Because, therefore, it is a thing so difficult, impossible, and far beyond Hercules' labours to be performed; let them be rude, stupid, ignorant, incult... stultos jubeo esse libenter. I will yet, to satisfy and please myself, make an Utopia of mine own, a new Atlantis, a poetical commonwealth of mine own, in which I will freely domineer, build cities, make laws, statutes, as I list myself. (97)

As Fish had observed, Burton's Utopia is foredefeated by the very terms in which it is proposed.[138] Burton justifies his project of building a poetical "Noplace" by appealing to the very impossibility of reform. His Utopia is at best a pleasant illusion, and as he spins it out, it ceases to be even that. Like Nemo, Utopia is a non-entity and is therefore theoretically free not to be what existing places are. Since, however, Burton's Utopia transgresses the laws of its own conception by aspiring to replace the existing world, it must sooner or later disintegrate.

> Utopian parity is a kind of government to be wished for rather than effected, Respub. Christianopolitana, Campanella's City of the Sun, and that New Atlantis, witty fictions, but mere chimeras. (101)

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138. Fish, p. 326.

It is true that, relative to the other Utopias Burton mentions, his own abounds in apparently practical schemes. Burton's poetical commonwealth has its own chimera, however, for its schemes depend upon the exclusion of melancholy or at least on the possibility of its control. As soon as Burton begins to allow for what may be actually effected rather than what need only be wished for, his Utopia becomes no Utopia at all,[139] but another vain attempt to "reform the world by commissioners".

> If it were possible, I would have such priests as should imitate Christ, charitable lawyers should love their neighbors as themselves, temperate and modest physicians, politicians contemn the world, philosophers should know themselves, noblemen live honestly, tradesmen leave lying and cozening, magistrates corruption, etc.; but this is impossible, I must get such as I may. (102)

The unacknowledged source of this passage, the section of Andreae's Menippus entitled "Utopia", omits Burton's debilitating qualifications.[140] "If it were possible" and "but this is impossible" are Burton's framing of Andreae's chimerical, but purely Utopian ideal.

Why, it may be wondered, did Burton describe at such length and elaborate from edition to edition a Utopia which he recognized to provide neither an imaginative sanctuary

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139. As Fish observes, ibid., p. 328. J. Max Patrick, "Robert Burton's Utopianism", Philological Quarterly XXVII (1948), 345-58, discusses Burton's Utopia in terms of its projects and with respect to its evolution through the Anatomy's editions. I have been unable to consult Pierre Mesnard, L'Utopie à la Renaissance, Paris, 1960, which includes discussion of Burton.

140. Edward Bensly first cited Burton's source, which is pp. 125-26 of the 1618 edition of J.V. Andreae's Menippus.

from melancholy nor a practical alternative to the world's melancholy kingdoms? That he hoped to see his blueprints executed is of course one possibility, although the context of the preface ("these straits wherein I am included" [107]) does not provide a sturdy scaffolding for the erection of real structures. That Burton intended his Utopia as a foil for the faults of contemporary England is unquestionable, although only some of Burton's projects are aimed at specific abuses. Not practical considerations, however, but the very unlikelihood or impossibility of reform moves Burton to design his visionary commonwealth. Velle licet, potiri non licet (II, 79). This is the psychological bargain of the melancholic: wishing is free, possession forbidden. Melancholy both empowers and frustrates Burton; it enables him to build well-regulated cities and compels him to see them as castles in the air. His imagination cannot free itself from dwelling on the conditions under which it has its licence. Most literary Utopias are presented (through the accounts of shipwrecked travellers, for instance) as remote but actually existing states. Burton, however, situates his Utopia not in the Mare del Zur or the inner parts of America but in his own melancholy mind. He presents not only a Utopia but the act of making a Utopia. His object is finally not to reform the world or to escape from it, but to dramatize the impulse and the consequences of a desire to do so.

To exclude melancholy from his poetical commonwealth, Burton would have to keep out not only the run of "knaves

and fools", but himself and his readers. It is "you" (Burton's readers) whom Burton represents as taxing his wishes for reform as vain and absurd, and in a sense it is they too who force Burton to say of his Utopia "but this is impossible". Burton cannot please himself and freely domineer because he cannot constitute his will except in relation to that which denies it. His Utopia must be, like the flowers in Marvell's post-lapsarian gardens, as "double as his mind". All Utopias are conceived in opposition to an existing world, but Burton complicates this opposition by making the Utopian and the melancholy worlds relative to each other and interdependent. Utopia cannot exclude the reality of melancholy, but neither can melancholy exclude the dream of Utopia. Melancholy, the defect of Utopia, calls forth Utopia, and includes Utopia by negating it. Indeed, the world of melancholy may be seen as a more inclusive dream than Utopia, a more extensive antiworld of which the implicitly self-denying ideal of Utopia is just one part. "Utopian parity" for example cannot be effected in Burton's Utopia but only in his melancholy world, where all are made equal by their common delirium.

Burton's Utopia has a place in his satirical preface because it extends the reign of melancholy into the utmost reaches of the mind in flight from melancholy. To call his Utopia satirical, however, is not to say that it is cynical or that (as Fish thinks) it is calculated first to deceive and then to disillusion the reader. The world of melancholy and that of Utopia oppose each other but occupy

the same ground. They form a pair of parodical doubles. Burton abandons his Utopia as such in the preface, but the pattern of its construction and demise is repeated throughout the Anatomy. We shall observe it again with respect to Burton's use of method, his analysis of love, his cures for melancholy, and in the opening paragraphs on man's excellency and fall.

"What Remains"

"What remains then", asks Burton after making his last ironic exceptions to the rule of folly, "but ... to carry them all together for company to Bedlam, and set Rabelais to be their physician" (119).[141] In remanding all men to Bedlam and setting Rabelais to treat them, Burton recapitulates the satire of his preface; nothing remains but to restate what has already been said. Like Democritus Jr., Rabelais is a latter-day Democritus, a physician and a laughing derider of the world's follies. Laughter itself is a means of treating the world's perversity and melancholy, 'treating' not only in the sense of 'curing' but of 'behaving toward', 'coming to terms with'. Readers who hear only

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141. Burton has probably borrowed the idea of setting Rabelais to treat the mad from J.V. Andreae. In his Mythologia Christiana Andreae describes a hospital for the mad to whose inmates "Franciscus Rabelasius Medicus ordinarius pharmaca & embammata applicat". Burton refers to Andreae's "new hospital" on the following page of the preface (120), where he also translates without acknowledgement some of the twenty-nine adjectives which Andreae applies to the malesanos admitted to his madhouse. v. Mythologia Christiana, Strasburg, 1619, I, 23-24.

"gravité moralisatrice" in Burton's preface have missed the note of the "great Stentorian Democritus, as big as that Rhodian Colossus" (52), and of the modern Democrituses that stand upon his shoulders and laugh with him.

Something else remains in Burton's pharmacopœia, however, besides laughter and the promised company of one's fellow madmen, namely the three partitions to which the preface "conduces". "At this present I have no more to say" (120), Burton sensibly concludes, for the argument of the preface appears to preclude the usefulness of further discourse. Instead of silence, but in its image, Burton pours out half-a-million more words on melancholy.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SATIRICAL TREATISE

> MAN, the most excellent and noble creature of the world, "the principal and mighty work of God, wonder of Nature," as Zoroaster calls him; audacis naturae miraculum, "the marvel of marvels," as Plato; "the abridgement and epitome of the world," as Pliny; Microcosmos, a little world, a model of the world, sovereign lord of the earth, viceroy of the world, sole commander and governor of all the creatures in it; to whose empire they are subject in particular, and yield obedience; far surpassing all the rest, not in body only, but in soul; Imaginis imago, created to God's own image, to that immortal and incorporeal substance, with all the faculties and powers belonging unto it; was at first pure, divine, perfect, happy, "created after God in true holiness and righteousness"; Deo congruens, free from all manner of infirmities, and put in Paradise, to know God, to praise and glorify Him, to do His will, Ut dis consimiles parturiat deos (as an old poet saith) to propagate the Church.
>
> But this most noble creature, Heu tristis et lachrymosa commutatio (one exclaims), O pitiful change! is fallen from that he was, and forfeited his estate, become miserabilis homuncio, a castaway, a caitiff, one of the most miserable creatures of the world, if he be considered in his own nature, an unregenerate man, and so much obscured by his fall that (some few relics excepted) he is inferior to a beast; "Man in honour that understandeth not, is like unto beasts that perish," so David esteems him: a monster by stupend metamorphoses, a fox, a dog, a hog, what not? Quantum mutatus ab illo! (I,130)

In several respects these opening paragraphs of the Anatomy's first partition are quite conventional and in others they are unmistakably Burtonian. The placing of a panegyric on man at the head of medical and psychological treatises was commonplace in the early seventeenth century.[1] Authors of such treatises sometimes add, like Burton, an answering

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1. v., for example, Anthony Zara, Anatomia Ingeniorum, Venice, 1615, pp. 1-16; Helkanah Crooke, Microcosmographia, London, 1615, p. 3; and infra, note 2.

paragraph on man's fall.[2] The words in which they praise and deplore man's estate are borrowed from a common stock of phrases upon which Burton also draws. Burton's singularity appears through the conventions, however. He uses no more epithets than other writers, but he piles them up and presses them together to achieve an effect of hyperbole. His paragraphs are breathless; the first consists of a single sentence. Burton's first paragraph may be compared with two other praises of man from other authors.

> Thrice renowmed Mercurie calleth him the living creature full of divine parts, the messenger of the Gods, the Lord of the things below, and fellow companion with the Spirits above: Pithagoras, the measure of all things: Synesius, the Horizon of things having and not having bodies: Zoroaster in a certaine kind of ravishment proclaimed him, the mightie worke and wonder of nature: Plato, the merveile of merveils: Aristotle, the politike living creature... Plinie, the ape or puppie of nature, the counterfeit of the whole world, the abridgement of the great world.

> Who made MAN, with powers which dart him from earth to heaven in a moment -- that great, that most excellent, and most noble creature of the world -- the miracle of nature, as Zoroaster in his book περὶ φύσεως called him -- the SHEKINAH of the divine presence, as Chrysostom -- the image of God, as Moses -- the ray of divinity, as Plato -- the marvel of marvels, as Aristotle -- to go sneaking on at this pitiful -- pimping -- pettifogging rate?

The first passage is an excerpt from the opening chapter of the English translation of André du Laurens' Treatise of Melancholike Diseases.[3] For all its names and qualities, du Laurens' encomium, unlike Burton's, is without momentum or rhetorical afflatus. The same cannot be said of the

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2. v. du Laurens, A Treatise of Melancholike Diseases, London, 1599, chaps. one and two. Burton knew this work in both Latin and English versions.

3. ibid., pp. 72-73.

second passage, which is taken from the first chapter of the fifth volume of Tristram Shandy.[4] Sterne's praise of man's nature, and lament for his lack of power, is plainly delivered tongue-in-cheek. It is a deliberate burlesque of the corresponding passage in Burton and is all the more ironic for coming in the middle of an attack on plagiarism also adapted from the Anatomy. Here as in other borrowings, Sterne has heightened an effect already present in Burton's prose.

Burton's panegyric verges on ridicule even before he begins to deplore man's fall. Whenever praise is carried to unusual length it may, upon the slightest hint, begin to sound like ironic abuse. The same rule of reversal applies, though with less force, to inordinate dispraise. The pattern of hyperbolic praise succeeded by hyperbolic abuse, such as Burton's opening paragraphs display and we have once before observed, is repeated throughout the Anatomy. Burton so schools his reader in the reflex to doubt his own or his author's inflated claims(in praising, defending, or documenting) that almost any assertion in the Anatomy comes to produce an ironic echo. Even without the preparative of the satirical preface, the weight of the kingly titles Burton heaps upon man's head in praising him threatens to topple his crown. Burton's histrionic lamentation for man's fall is also shaded towards its own mockery.

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4. Laurence Sterne, Tristram Shandy, ed. James A. Work, New York, 1940, p. 343.

With the help of Zoroaster et al., Burton begins to describe man as if he still reigned in Paradise; only the unobtrusive words "was at first" disclose the flaw in the rhetorical assurance with which man's perfection is (at first) presented. The phrase "But this noble creature", however, abruptly introduces a paragraph that revokes man's claim to sovereignty over the earth and casts him down below the beasts. The Glory of the world becomes the Jest, "a monster by stupend metamorphoses". The precipitous change from sublime praise to vituperation mimics this metamorphosis and is itself comic, even farcical. It suggests nothing so much as the image of a man whose heels suddenly fly out from under him; for the apple Burton has substituted the banana-skin. As in the preface, the world (man's "little world") is turned upside-down by a laughing, declaiming Democritus Jr. The first two paragraphs of the Anatomy enact a satirical skit on the Renaissance glorification of man.

To be sure, Burton earnestly offers his readers the chance to cultivate (to a degree) the "few relics" of their divinity left over from the fall through the exercise of temperance and reason. When Agamemnon could moderate his passions, Burton observes in concluding his first subsection,

> he was os oculosque Jovi par: like Jupiter in feature, Mars in valour, Pallas in wisdom, another god; but when he became angry, he was a lion, a tiger, a dog, etc., there appeared no sign or likeness of Jupiter in him; so we, as long as we are ruled by reason, correct our inordinate appetite, and conform ourselves to God's word, are as so many saints: but if we give reins to lust, anger, ambition, pride, and follow our own ways, we degenerate into beasts, transform ourselves, overthrow our constitutions, provoke God to anger, and

> heap upon us this of melancholy, and all kinds of incurable diseases, as a just and deserved punishment of our sins. (I, 137)

To "conform ourselves to God's word", to be "another god", or "as so many saints" are indeed godly aspirations. Whether they are real possibilities for Adam's posterity, however, especially in view of the argument of the preface, is at the least problematic.

> "Thou hast stricken them, but they have not sorrowed; they have refused to receive correction; they have not returned." (I, 132)

So Burton somberly quotes from Jeremiah several pages before his exhortation to correct inordinate appetite. Burton does of course proceed in his treatise to counsel moderation in the six non-natural things, as he informs his reader he will. His later descriptions of well-tempered constitutions and well-governed lives will, however, as we shall see, repeat the pattern of fall set forth in the opening of the first partition.

Preface and Treatise

Burton's treatise proper differs from his preface in several important respects, but they are not necessarily those which he himself specifies. To accept the guidance of an ironist (as some have done) is to miss the way to the heart of this book. Unfortunately, to challenge his directions is, while necessary, often to belabour his irony. Nevertheless, the relationship between preface and treatise must be clarified.

At the outset of the satirical argument of the preface, Burton states:

> So that, take melancholy in what sense you will, properly or improperly, in disposition or habit, for pleasure or for pain, dotage, discontent, fear, sorrow, madness, for part or all, truly or metaphorically, 'tis all one. (40)

This declaration should be compared with the following one at the end of the preface, which appears to reply to it:

> Although, for the above-named reasons, I had a just cause to undertake this subject, to point at these particular species of dotage, that so men might acknowledge their imperfections, and seek to reform what is amiss; yet I have a more serious intent at this time; and to omit all impertinent digressions, to say no more of such as are improperly melancholy, or metaphorically mad, lightly mad, or in disposition, as stupid, angry, drunken, silly, sottish, sullen, proud, vain-glorious, ridiculous, beastly, peevish, obstinate, impudent, extravagant, dry, doting, dull, desperate, harebrain, etc., mad, frantic, foolish, heteroclites, which no new hospital can hold, no physic help: my purpose and endeavour is, in the following discourse to anatomize this humour of melancholy, through all his parts and species, as it is an habit, or an ordinary disease, and that philosophically, medicinally, to show the causes, symptoms, and several cures of it, that it may be the better avoided. (120)

The very energy with which Burton lists those madmen about whom he promises he will say no more suggests that he will not strictly keep his word. An "impertinent digression" turns Burton's declaration of serious intent into satire. Such tremors of unreliability notwithstanding, Burton appears to maintain: that he has made a satirical demonstration of men's melancholy and that now he will make a philosophical and medical analysis of it; that he has included passing moods (melancholy "in disposition") as examples of melancholy and madness but that henceforth he will consider melancholy

only "as it is an habit, or an ordinary disease"; that he has used the name of melancholy in an "improper" and "metaphorical" sense and that he will now confine his usage to denoting the humour or condition of melancholy itself, or in the case of madness, to actual mania; and finally, that unlike the mad passions he has heretofore dealt with, from which no man is free, and which are incurable, he will now address himself to a disease that may be avoided and which has "several cures". What Burton says, however, is not borne out by what he does. The melancholy which the treatise anatomizes is not essentially different from the universal folly of the preface, despite the "philosophical" and "medicinal" language which is sometimes used to describe it; the figurative extension of melancholy and madness is never abandoned; and though melancholy may be eased, it may be neither wholly avoided nor entirely cured.

Burton's reasonable tone at the opening and closing of the second passage quoted above cannot dispel the false logic which supports his argument any more than his claim to new-found seriousness can repress the outburst of comically abusive epithets in the passage's middle section. Burton's summary of his defence of his subject, the point of transition between preface and treatise, is necessarily vague. He has undertaken "this subject", he explains, "so men might acknowledge their imperfections and seek to reform what is amiss", i.e. so men might recognize their melancholy and seek its cure; no other understanding of men's "imperfections" and the reform of "what is amiss" would "conduce" to a discourse on melancholy. Lest he appear to invalidate <u>a priori</u> a

treatise that proposes to cure a disease which the preface has found to be incurable, however, Burton must appear to redefine his conception of melancholy and to shift his tone. When Burton claims for his work a "more serious intent" than that which he has already announced in the preface (for which he has also claimed seriousness), he is either dismissing his preface as irrelevant to the treatise to which it purports to conduce, or his new declaration of intent does not differ in substance from the serio-comic demonstration of the reason for his subject which has preceded it. The latter surely being the case, how may we account for Burton's apparent (but deceptive) volte-face?

Stanley Fish has observed that Burton's periodic assurances of his seriousness, or more often of his intent to become serious in a succeeding portion of his argument, are seldom if ever made good by his performance.[5] Fish considers them so many baits designed to trap the reader's illusory belief in a world in which seriousness and coherence are possible (while the world he is made to experience is fragmented and ridiculous). While this explanation describes one of the effects of Burton's reassurances, it risks making him into a mere perpetrator of dialectical ruses. It is difficult, however, to imagine that Burton could have sustained his consuming interest in his subject if he had not himself been half taken in by his own promises. Burton

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5. Fish, Self-Consuming Artifacts, p. 304.

himself may be said to be deluded by the mirage of sanity or utopia, for, like the reader, he is a melancholy traveller through his own pages. To picture Burton as a seventeenth-century Flaubert systematically raking through the Oxford libraries in order to gather material for an encyclopédie de la bêtise like Bouvard et Pécuchet is to ignore the heroic dimension of Burton's search for sanity and self-understanding.

> To anatomize this humour aright, through all the members of this our microcosmos, is as great a task as to reconcile those chronological errors in the Assyrian monarchy, find out the quadrature of a circle, the creeks and sounds of the north-east or north-west passages, and all out as good a discovery as that hungry Spaniard's of Terra Australis Incognita. (38)

Fish argues that Burton's comparisons undercut the feasibility of his own enterprise and that Burton is covertly confessing that his Anatomy is a grand piece of folly.[6] Even if this is so, it is only half the truth. Burton's comparisons are to projects in which, in other parts of his book, he expresses what appears to be a genuine interest. He owned books on all the subjects he names. Like his Utopia, Burton's Anatomy is divided by its framer's conviction both of the worth, even of the necessity, of his design, and his consciousness of the foolishness or impossibility of prosecuting it "aright". This fundamental division in Burton's own mind stretches his prose on the rack of self-contradiction and leads him so frequently to dash his own hopes.

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6. ibid., p. 317.

Disposition and Habit

Medical writers typically distinguish between melancholy in disposition and melancholy in habit and treat only the latter. While Burton also makes this theoretical distinction at the end of the preface and elsewhere, he subverts it in practice throughout the Anatomy. In his fifth subsection, "Melancholy in Disposition, improperly so called. Equivocations", Burton gives a clear definition of his terms. He begins:

> Melancholy, the subject of our present discourse, is either in disposition or habit. In disposition, is that transitory melancholy which goes and comes upon every small occasion of sorrow, need, sickness, trouble, fear, grief, passion, or perturbation of the mind, any manner of care, discontent, or thought, which causeth anguish, dullness, heaviness, and vexation of spirit, any ways opposite to pleasure, mirth, joy, delight, causing frowardness in us, or a dislike. In which equivocal and improper sense, we call him melancholy that is dull, sad, sour, lumpish, ill-disposed, solitary, anyway moved or displeased. And from these melancholy dispositions no man living is free, no Stoic, none so wise, none so happy, none so patient, so generous, so godly, so divine, that can vindicate himself; so well composed, but more or less, some time or other, he feels the smart of it. Melancholy in this sense is the character of mortality. (I, 143-44)

This apparent rejection of melancholy so loosely taken from subsequent consideration must be pursued to the end of the subsection, by which time Burton's own equivocations will have become manifest. Burton first elaborates upon the inevitability of pain and sorrow in rhythms familiar from the sermons of other seventeenth-century divines. He counsels:

> There is no way to avoid it, but to arm thyself

> with patience, with magnanimity, to oppose thyself unto it, to suffer affliction as a good soldier of Christ, as Paul adviseth, constantly to bear it. (I, 145)

Thus far the divine physician. "But forasmuch as so few can embrace this good counsel of his, or use it aright, but rather as so many brute beasts give way to passion", Burton continues, and from this point on in the subsection, man's failure to arm himself precipitates him of his own will into "a labyrinth of cares, woes, miseries". The result of this declension is that "it falleth out oftentimes that these dispositions become habits". Burton once more raises the hope that "one by his singular moderation and well-composed carriage can happily overcome", but opposes the case of a second "no whit able to sustain". Burton prejudges the outcome of the struggle when in his final (and summary) case history he calls the combatant simply "a patient":

> If any discontent seize upon a patient, in an instant all other perturbations... will set upon him, and then like a lame dog or broken-winged goose he droops and pines away, and is brought at last to that ill habit or malady of melancholy itself. (I, 146)

The well-composed man who is melancholy only in disposition turns out to be no less a chimera than the wise man free from all passions who is never found in the long search of the preface. Only the degree of the habit or disease is at issue.

> So that as the philosophers make eight degrees of heat and cold, we may make eighty-eight of melancholy, as the parts affected are diversely seized with it, or have been plunged more or less into this infernal gulf, or waded deeper into it. (I, 146)

When to conclude his argument and the subsection Burton restates his original distinction between melancholy in

disposition and in habit, it no longer carries its customary meaning:

> But all these melancholy fits, howsoever pleasing at first, or displeasing, violent and tyrannizing over those whom they seize on for the time; yet these fits I say, or men affected, are but improperly so called, because they continue not, but come and go, as by some objects they are moved. This melancholy of which we are to treat, is a habit, morbus sonticus or chronicus, a chronic or continuate disease, a settled humour, as Aurelianus and others call it, not errant, but fixed; and as it was long increasing, so now being (pleasant, or painful) grown to a habit, it will hardly be removed. (I, 146)

Burton has just shown, however, how melancholy "fits" are the less advanced stages of melancholy illness. He can claim without self-contradiction that he only anatomizes the settled disease of melancholy, because he equivocates on the concept of disease by assimilating to it all the contingencies of mortality. Just as Ben Jonson rejected the representation of humours other than those that were principles of character, Burton denies errant dispositions in favour of fixed; yet Burton does not recognize melancholy in disposition except as a prelude or symptom of disease. Far from distinguishing effectively between dispositions and habits, Burton acts out the transition from one to the other in his own prose: by the end of the subsection, "every small occasion" of discontent has grown to a fixed disease that "will hardly be removed". Burton's pictures of melancholy are essentially caricatures of the most ordinary human passions. Symptoms of melancholy are:

> to him by fits, to a second continuate; and howsoever

> these symptoms be common and incident to all persons, yet they are the more remarkable, frequent, furious, and violent in melancholy men. (I, 396)

Burton presents a psychopathology of everyday life. Humanity ranges itself among various of the "eighty-eight degrees" of a morbid condition.

The Metaphorically Mad

Like the "improperly melancholy", the "metaphorically mad" make their appearance in the treatise no less than in the preface. According to Burton, ambition is madness, covetousness folly, self-love leads to melancholy, dotage, and madness, study to the same. Anger and all passions both <u>are</u> and <u>cause</u> madness and melancholy. Particularly in his discussions of perturbations and of love, Burton devotes more space to depicting ungoverned passions as moral madness than as clinical melancholy. The verses in which he describes the "Maniacus" pictured on the frontispiece exemplify the way in which he represents the passions of the mind throughout the <u>Anatomy</u>.

> But see the Madman rage downright
> With furious looks, a ghastly sight.
> Naked in chains bound doth he lie,
> And roars amain, he knows not why.
> Observe him; for as in a glass,
> Thine angry portraiture it was.
> His picture keep still in thy presence;
> 'Twixt him and thee there's no difference. (8)

Burton identifies the mad Bedlamite with the reader temporarily mad from anger. Neither is properly melancholy, but both are melancholics in Burton's all-encompassing anatomy of human unreason. Burton is always careful to show how the production of black bile results from the indulgence of passions and

perturbations, but his medical demonstrations seem almost incidental to the mass of his metaphorical material.[7]

"... and several cures of it"

Those who are "improperly melancholy, or metaphorically mad, lightly mad, or in disposition", Burton states, "... no new hospital can hold, no physic help". Those on the other hand whose melancholy is "an habit, or an ordinary disease" may profit from the remedies to be described in his treatise. Or so Burton claims in the passage transitional between preface and treatise. Even as he does so, however, he resumes the main theme of his foregoing satire, for, as he casually concedes, the "ordinary disease" of melancholy is indeed so ordinary that it is (like human folly) "universal", "epidemical", and "so common in this crazed age of ours, that scarce one in a thousand is free from it" (120). Burton's readjustment of intention does not outlast its own formulation. Nevertheless, neither the universality of melancholy properly so called, nor Burton's subsequent equivocations on the meaning of propriety in melancholy, nor his continued use of metaphorical language to describe the disease prevents Burton from proceeding resolutely to the "several cures of it".

Examination of the nature of Burton's particular, but largely conventional remedies for melancholy lies outside the

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7. v. supra , pp. 188-89.

scope of this study and has been adequately performed by others.[8] I have stated above, in discussing Burton's persona and self-presentation, what I believe to be the general status of his proposed cures.[9] The subject merits further investigation, however, for the cure of melancholy souls is Burton's rationale for his exhaustive analysis of the disease and bears on the Anatomy's literary strategies no less than on its moral and medical prescriptions.

As Burton covertly suggests in his transitional passage, melancholy (however qualified by name or degree) is a condition that has no absolute cure. Burton admits as much in plain terms at several points in the body of his treatise. "We... heap upon us this of melancholy, and all kinds of incurable diseases" (I, 137). Envy is "in most men an incurable disease" (I, 265). Likewise, covetousness is "an incurable disease... an ill habit, 'yielding no remedies'" (I, 283). "Some affections of the mind are altogether incurable", pronounces Burton; "yet", he continues in the introduction to his section on the remedy of discontents, "these helps of art, physic, and philosophy must not be contemned". (II, 127). Indeed, Burton sometimes goes so far as to herald one or another of his "helps" as a sovereign remedy for melancholy. Thus, of "comfortable speeches": "how present a remedy they yield, and many times a sole sufficient cure of themselves" (II, 126). Of air:

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8. Simon, Robert Burton, and Babb, Sanity in Bedlam.

9. supra, pp. 253-55.

"Levinus Lemnius... attributes so much to air, and rectifying of wind and windows, that he holds it sufficient to make a man sick or well" (II, 66). Under the heading "Preparatives and Purgers", Burton lists among "excellent cures":

> Rulandus' admirable water for melancholy, which cent. 2, cap. 96, he names spiritum vitae aureum, panaceam, what not? and his absolute medicine of 50 eggs, Curat. Empir. cent. 1, cur. 5, to be taken three in a morning, with a powder of his. Faventius, Pract. Empir., doubles this number of eggs... All these are yet nothing to those chemical preparatives of aqua chelidonia, quintessence of hellebore, salts, extracts, distillations, oils, aurum potabile, etc. (II, 240).

Just as Burton's doubts about the possibility of cure are always balanced by avowals of faith in "art, physic, and philosophy", so his enthusiasm for Rulandus' and others' "absolute medicines" is always countered by a cross-current of irony (as above) or by reservations openly expressed.

Burton's central and most frequently reiterated view of the cure of melancholy strikes a mean between the extremes to which he occasionally gives vent. It is set forth in the first words of the second partition:

> Inveterate Melancholy, howsoever it may seem to be a continuate, inexorable disease, hard to be cured, accompanying them to their graves, most part, as Montanus observes, yet many times it may be helped, even that which is most violent, or at least, according to the same author, "it may be mitigated and much eased." Nil desperandum. It may be hard to cure, but not impossible for him that is most grievously affected, if he be but willing to be helped.
>
> Upon this good hope I will proceed... (II, 5)

The opening clauses threaten to cut off the possibility that the partition on the cure of melancholy may continue, but, despite objections and conditions ("howsoever", "yet", "even",

"at least", "but", "if"), Burton struggles through to the "good hope" of his next paragraph. Burton does not expect to accomplish an absolute cure for melancholy but rather to ease an affliction that is unavoidable and probably inveterate. "The cure for the greatest part of human miseries is not radical but palliative":[10] Dr. Johnson's well-known words summarize the therapeutic philosophy of one of his favourite books. Burton establishes the impossibility of the radical reform of human nature in the preface, and although visions of utopia and panacea continue to rise and fall through the treatise that follows, for the most part Burton sets aside his plans for the remaking of man in favour of reducing man's miseries.

Even the more modest and practical objectives of the body of Burton's treatise, however, have their limitations. Counsels of moderation and the consolation of philosophy can only mitigate, not remove melancholy. Moreover, certain purely technical difficulties interfere with Burton's course of cures. He has taken pains in physic, Burton assures us, but is nevertheless unable to discourse with authority on the disease that Laurentius calls "the reproach of physicians" (II, 17).

> But what do I do, interposing in that which is beyond my reach? A blind man cannot judge of colours, nor I peradventure of these things. (II, 16)

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10. Samuel Johnson, Rambler no. 32, The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, vol. III, ed. W.J. Bate and A.B. Strauss, New Haven, 1969, p. 175.

Burton is not alone in his inability to judge of the means of curing melancholy; the subject is evidently also beyond the reach of the physicians whose contentions over matters of treatment Burton records in "Physician, Patient, Physic" and throughout the Anatomy.

Consultation of a practicing physician is nevertheless to be preferred to a patient's applying to himself the remedies found in physicians' books:

> "Many things," (saith Penottus) "are written in our books, which seem to the reader to be excellent remedies, but they that make use of them are often deceived, and take for physic poison."
>
> . . .
>
> without exquisite knowledge, to work out of books is most dangerous: how unsavoury a thing it is to believe writers, and take upon trust. (II, 20)

True, Burton has only herbal and chemical preparations in mind here. True also, that in his own book, addressed directly to the patient, he devotes many pages to listing such remedies. Tobacco is one of them:

> Tobacco, divine, rare, superexcellent tobacco, which goes far beyond all panaceas, potable gold, and philosophers' stones, a sovereign remedy to all diseases. A good vomit, I confess, a virtuous herb, if it be well qualified, opportunely taken, and medicinally used; but as it is commonly abused by most men, which take it as tinkers do ale, 'tis a plague, a mischief, a violent purger of goods, lands, health; hellish, devilish, and damned tobacco, the ruin and overthrow of body and soul. (II, 228)

In proportion to his ironic recording of the claims made for tobacco to cure diseases and his invective against its usual effects, Burton's conditional approval of its medicinal use has little force. Such a rhetorical pattern, in which a proper remedy cannot hold its own against misapplication, is

not uncommon in Burton's presentation of cures. Moreover, the proper remedy may be so elusive as to resist formulation. In his subsection on the rectification of retention and evacuation, Burton opens the subject of sex as follows:

> Immoderate Venus in excess, as it is a cause, or in defect; so, moderately used, to some parties [is] an only help, a present remedy. (II, 33)

He concludes his discussion: "the extremes being both bad, the medium is to be kept, which cannot easily be determined" (II, 34). Tobacco appears liable to abuse, and the right use of Venus does not appear at all. Burton continually cautions that the remedies for melancholy must be "warily understood" (II, 33) and "warily applied" (III, 193), but at least some of the time he casts doubt on the possibility of their being understood and profitably applied at all.

In the preface, Burton takes on the world as a whole; the reader is swallowed up in it. In the treatise, Burton addresses his reader as an individual whose case of melancholy may have, to a degree, particular causes and cures. The Anatomy's fictive "thou" remains an everyman, but aspects of his condition may be isolated and treated. Since so much depends on the nature of the particular case, however, Burton's general rules are constantly subject to qualification. "That which is conducing to one man, in one case, the same time is opposite to another" (II, 20), as he frequently observes. Music, for example, an ancient cure for melancholy, may cause it in some men. The same holds true for mirth,

good company, and study, if not for all remedies. Even when the etiology of a particular case of melancholy is known, the cure of one complaint may be the cause of another. Cause and cure, cause and symptom "tread in a ring" (I, 259), as Burton says.

As Ruth Fox remarks, the preface stands not only before but above the succeeding partitions.[11] However earnestly he devotes himself to worldly (partial, palliative) cures, Burton never abandons his station above the world. On one level the treatise qualifies the vision of the preface and on another extends it. In the preface, Burton demonstrates to his fictus adversarius that the world is irremediably melancholy; in the body of the treatise, Burton shows how melancholy may be relieved, and his adversarius in turn denies the value or practicability of Burton's remedies. In both preface and treatise, of course, Burton and his reader make up between them one voice the nature of which the reversal of their roles does not alter. "If it be not for thy ease, it may for mine own" (II, 127), Burton says of his "Consolatory Digression". The resistance shown to his remedies by a fictive "thou" in this section is likewise Burton's own. The second partition opens with a dialogue in which the conflict of voices ('curable'/'incurable') is centered on the words of a single author, Montanus, who is

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11. Fox, The Tangled Chain, p. 208.

made to mirror the doubleness of the voice which quotes him. Similar dialogues (between patient and physician, and physician and physician) run through all the sections of the Anatomy in which cure of melancholy is the subject. The status of Burton's remedies cannot be faithfully described without taking account of the manner of their presentation, which is not so much expository as it is dramatic and dialogical.

Like every other writer on dietetic medicine before him, Burton advises moderation of the passions. Unlike others, however, he repeatedly challenges the possibility that men can achieve such moderation. An examination of the opening subsection of the Anatomy's member on the rectification of perturbations of the mind ("From himself, by resisting to the utmost, confessing his grief to a friend, etc.") will illustrate the manner of his proceeding. Burton begins by praising the pleasures of a quiet mind and by citing medical opinion on the necessity of the management of the passions. He concludes a full page of such discourse:

> Many are fully cured when they have seen or heard, etc., enjoy their desires, or be secured and satisfied in their minds; Galen, the common master of them all, from whose fountain they fetch water, brags, lib. 1 de san. tuend., that he for his part hath cured divers of this infirmity, solum animis ad rectum institutis, by right settling alone of their minds. (II, 103)

Galen and his successors may brag, but the patient may belie them:

> Yea, but you will here infer that this is excellent good indeed if it could be done; but how shall it be effected, by whom, what art, what means?

> hic labor, hoc opus est. 'Tis a natural infirmity, a most powerful adversary; all men are subject to passions... The wisest men, greatest philosophers, of most excellent wit, reason, judgment, divine spirits, cannot moderate themselves in this behalf; such as are sound in body and mind, Stoics, heroes, Homer's gods, all are passionate, and furiously carried sometimes; and how shall we that are already crazed, fracti animis, sick in body, sick in mind, resist? We cannot perform it. You may advise and give good precepts, as who cannot? But how shall they be put in practice? (II, 103-04)

The patient has evidently read Burton's satirical preface. When Burton retaliates at length with precepts and examples designed to fortify a patient's will to resist the tyranny of passions, he seems to spend his philosophic fury upon himself. His fictus adversarius remains unconvinced:

> Yea, but you infer again... We know this to be true; we should moderate ourselves, but we are furiously carried, we cannot make use of such precepts, we are overcome, sick, male sani, distempered and habituated to these courses, we can make no resistance; you may as well bid him that is diseased not to feel pain, as a melancholy man not to fear, not to be sad: 'tis within his blood, his brains, his whole temperature, it cannot be removed. (II, 105-06)

To overcome this resistance, the physician urges more precepts and fresh examples. They are not wooden or ill-chosen; on the contrary, Burton's arguments are lively and perhaps persuasive. But he himself admits their possible inadequacy by beginning his next paragraph with these words:

> If. then our judgement be so depraved, our reason overruled, will precipitated, that we cannot seek our own good, or moderate ourselves, as in this disease commonly it is... (II, 107).

By the phrase "as in this disease commonly it is", Burton concedes most of the ground which he had sought and perhaps seemed to win.

By presenting his counsels in the form of a debate with an adversary, Burton is able to bring men's inner resistance to reason and virtue out into the open to express itself on the page. He may not win the debate, but winning is not Burton's real objective. When Timothy Bright answers the melancholy patient "M." to whom his Treatise is addressed, his answers are presented as final and convincing. Burton, on the other hand, represents the successive stages of the deterioration of the force of his own counsels. Neither defeat nor victory can be conclusive for Burton, since conclusion of any kind is impossible in the unbounded universe of the Anatomy. His own rectification of passions is itself continually perturbed by thoughts of its possible insufficiency. When Burton's dialogue is over, both he and his readers are left without means to amend themselves, for all they possess in the end is a knowledge of the limitations of counsel and reason to moderate the passions. Burton's very enactment of this coming to knowledge, however, transforms the overruling of reason and the precipitation of the will from a real descensus Averno to a scene in a tragi-comedy. The reader can behold an exchange in which a melancholy patient gives a fillip to his physician and where the worst that he can suffer is made the subject of a contest of words. In his agon of precept and passion, of reason and madness, Burton represents the fate of a creature whose whole life is a contradiction to his knowledge (as Sterne's Tristram says of his father). This drama must be comic as well as tragic, because knowledge is itself a mixed commodity: it affords access to the helps of "art, physic, and philosophy", but

it also brings awareness of death, against which all helps are powerless.

Burton knows that to read of one's fate is far preferable to suffering idleness and a melancholy unmediated by art. Moderation of the passions may be unattainable, but other remedies and other dialogues remain to be tried. Burton concludes his subsection by mustering arguments to defend that corner of his projected course of cure that remains unengulfed by melancholy. His discourse on the ease that may be procured through imparting one's fear or grief to a "faithful friend" is eloquent, so eloquent, in fact, that its rhetorical assurance becomes suspect. A "faithful friend" may indeed relieve melancholy, but the availability of such a person is pointedly (though indirectly) questioned. The passage in which this questioning occurs must be quoted in full, because it raises typical problems of reading Burton's prose.

> Quanta inde voluptas! quanta securitas! Chrysostom adds, what pleasure, what security by that means! "Nothing so available, or that so much refresheth the soul of man." Tully, as I remember, in an epistle to his dear friend Atticus, much condoles the defect of such a friend. "I live here" (saith he) "in a great city, where I have a multitude of acquaintance, but not a man of all that company with whom I dare familiarly breathe, or freely jest. Wherefore I expect thee, I desire thee, I send for thee; for there be many things which trouble and molest me, which, had I but thee in presence, I could quickly disburden myself of in a walking discourse." The like, peradventure, may he and he say with that old man in the comedy,
>
> > Nemo est meorum amicorum hodie,
> > Apud quem expromere occulta mea audeam,
>
> and much inconvenience may both he and he suffer in the meantime by it. He or he, or whosoever labours of this malady, by all means let him get some trusty friend. (II, 108)

Some readers may not find this description of the temporary unavailability of a trusty friend at all pointed. Burton does not deny that such persons exist; on the contrary, he buoyantly assumes that they do and names several exemplary pairs of friends. Yet he also records numerous instances where through lack of a friend "much inconvenience may he and he suffer in the meantime". The example of Cicero, cited in apparent support of Chrysostom's exclamation, instead exposes the limits of the security to which rectification of perturbations through "confessing his grief to a friend, etc." is subject. Atticus is faithful but absent. Cicero's letter (to Atticus, moreover) is a record of trouble and molestation, not relief.

A loophole undoubtedly exists in Burton's argument. Such loopholes are common in his prose and lead to the inveterate melancholy that always shadows his discourse of cures. They do not destroy Burton's arguments, but force them to remain open. When Burton fails to let melancholy have vent (by direct dialogue, for example), his exposition must undercut or oppose itself in some subtler way. Thus, in his commendation of help from friends, he does not write 'Yea, but you will infer, where shall such a trusty friend be found?', but instead quotes two melancholy lines from Terence to the same effect.

Of course, a reader is at liberty to become convinced by any of Burton's exhortations, to take sides against the relapses into melancholy that Burton puts upon him, and to strain at Burton's loopholes. Those who take such liberties

misread Burton, but to their own profit, until such time as their wills are precipitated or they lose their friends. Then they will need to re-open the Anatomy and resume their roles as Burton's melancholy patients, at the point where they had broken off the dialogue.

Something in the nature of cure itself leads Burton to leave loopholes in his arguments and to avoid his cure as much as to seek it. For one who has fallen out of the order of Paradise, who has become melancholy, the next order is that of death. Death is the 'cure for all ills' that lurks in a thousand lesser cures. To fail to be cured is paradoxically an assurance of vitality. By leaving his prose open, Burton not only puts off the catastrophe of the drama he enacts, but never represents mortality except through the ambivalent state of melancholy. Only Burton's actual death could put an end to the writing of his book. The epitaph he left for himself records in the barest, most absolute terms the unresolved dialogue that melancholy holds with itself in the Anatomy: "Hic jacet Democritus Junior, cui Vitam dedit, et Mortem, Melancholia".

Burton's irresolution also manifests itself in another, more conventional way. He keeps his cures open to melancholy without closing them to hope. Hope eases the mind without "satisfying" it; it concedes the present to possess the future. Nil desperandum is Burton's constant counsel. Despair is the converse of absolute cure and is equally one-sided.

SPERATE MISERI,
CAVETE FELICES. (III, 432)

Burton placed these commands at the foot of his final subsection on the cure of despair. Throughout the Anatomy, consolatory and minatory attitudes go hand in hand; they complement, not contradict each other. We have examined the minatory section of the Anatomy that Burton labels as satirical (the preface); his formal treatment of consolation also deserves notice.

Burton's eighty-page "A Consolatory Digression, containing the Remedies of all manner of Discontents" is, as he notes, hardly a digression from his subject at all. The entire Anatomy has been justly called a consolation of philosophy.[12] Burton's consolatory strategy does not depend on philosophy alone, however, at least not on philosophy as a secure refuge from melancholy and madness. Philosophy may itself be limited, either on account of its practical inefficacy or because it participates at some level in the melancholy that it offers to console. Burton raises these possibilities himself as he prepares for his consolatory task. Cardan argues that philosophy may help in most cases; in reply,

> Arrianus and Plotinus are stiff in the contrary opinion, that such precepts can do little good. Boethius himself cannot comfort in some cases, they will reject such speeches like bread of stones, Insana stultae mentis haec solatia... Most men will here except: Trivial consolations, ordinary speeches, and known persuasions in this behalf will be of small force; what can any man

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12. Colie, Paradoxia Epidemica, p. 437; v. also John L. Lievsay, "Robert Burton's De Consolatione", South Atlantic Quarterly 55 (1956), 329-36.

> say that hath not been said? To what end are such paranetical discourses? You may as soon remove Mount Caucasus as alter some men's affections. (II, 127)

That philosophical precepts are "the insane consolations of a foolish mind", is an opinion that Burton does not wholly remove even though he goes on to reject it himself. He not only anticipates that "most men" will scorn his familiar precepts, but canvasses for support of this position and gives it full expression. Having done so, he proceeds, as always, in spite of all objections:

> Yet sure I think they cannot choose but do some good, and comfort and ease a little; though it be the same again, I will say it, and upon that hope I will adventure. (II, 127)

Although the debate is, at best, a stand-off, Burton prosecutes his design without weighing further its possible shortcomings.

As in his section of perturbations, however, dialogue will out. While Burton rehearses the commonplaces of consolatory rhetoric on a colossal scale, another voice resists them, from without and from within.

> Yea, but I am ashamed, disgraced, dishonoured, degraded, exploded: my notorious crimes and villainies are come to light (deprendi miserum est), my filthy lust, abominable oppression and avarice lies open, my good name's lost, my fortune's gone. I have been stigmatized, whipped at post, arraigned and condemned, I am a common obloquy, I have lost my ears, odious, execrable, abhorred of God and men. Be content, 'tis but a nine days' wonder... (II, 199)

> thy father's dead, thy brother robbed, wife runs mad, neighbour hath killed himself; 'tis heavy, ghastly, fearful news at first, in every man's mouth, table talk; but after a while who speaks or thinks of it? (II, 199-200)

If these consolations console, it is because their inadequacy to banish the effects of the calamities they oppose is so

apparent that it is laughable. Indifference to misfortune and to the opinions of others are of course standard topics of the rhetoric of consolation. Burton both indulges and burlesques them. Irony consoles philosophy as philosophy consoles misfortune. Beckett's treatment of philosophical indifference in Malone Dies may be compared with Burton's: "To be buried in lava and not turn a hair, it is then a man shows what stuff he is made of".[13] By his insouciant reply to the distressed ("'tis but a nine days' wonder"), Burton advertises the triviality of his consolation but also makes the complaints of the hapless victim appear histrionic. He answers a fool according to his folly.

Burton's making light of affliction does not mean that he does not take his task seriously; on the contrary, making light of affliction is what serious consolation consists of. Discontent is serious. The philosopher who argues that it is groundless and the satirist who laughs at it perform the same operation. The techniques by which they do so are common both to Menippean satire and to the traditional rhetoric of consolation. Both satirist and consoler work to create in the mind of the sufferer an opposition between a false opinion (the opinion one has of one's misery) and a true one (that, as Burton says, "'tis no such matter"). The consolatory writer creates a second person, like Boethius' Philosophia, with whom to enter into dialogue, through whom

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13. Samuel Beckett, Malone Dies, New York, 1965, p. 254.

the mind may return to itself with the knowledge of its self-possession. The mind must be alienated from itself in order to oppose its own condition (in order to escape its own mental alienation). In De Consolatione, Boethius himself acts the part of the faulty, discontented view of the world, from which Philosophia weans him. In Burton's remedies "Against Poverty and Want, with such other Adversities", Burton pleads the cause of philosophy against "the world's esteem" (II, 145). The topics of consolation, like those of Menippean satire, are often framed as paradoxes. The sufferer's opinion of his misfortune is treated as the common one and is overturned.

The world created by the rhetoric of consolation (in which, for example, the rich man is more miserable than the pauper) is an abstract version of the Menippean world upside-down. In Lucian's Hades, in Boethius, and in Burton, the fates of men are levelled by their common limits, and the relativity of all worldly states is exhibited from the perspective of another world. To be "above one's fate" is to be the overseer (the kataskopos) of one's own life. The difference between the open merriment among the Cynics and cobblers in Lucian's underworld and the fortitude in suffering that Philosophy brings Boethius is only a matter of tone. What Dr. Johnson required in a latter-day Democritus, "cheerful wisdom and instructive mirth", captures both poles of the seriocomic in its chiasmus. Johnson read Burton's Anatomy, as Sir John Hawkins reported, "for the purpose of exhilaration".[14] To exhilarate ("To make cheerful; to

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14. Sir John Hawkins, Life of Samuel Johnson, London, 1787.

to cheer; to fill with mirth; to enliven; to glad; to gladden")[15]: this is Burton's serious purpose.

In his "Consolatory Digression", Burton's satirical purposes are essentially the same as those of his "art, physic, and philosophy". Burton's satire simply takes his consolatory strategy one step further than his precepts can go by consoling by irony when "ordinary consolations" fail. To conclude this section on cures, I would like to show what happens when Burton's satire and his therapeutic orthodoxy are at odds, by examining a small portion of the third partition, on love-melancholy.

Burton begins his member on the cure of love-melancholy by affirming, in the face of others' opposition and subject to certain conditions, that:

> Although it be controverted by some, whether love-melancholy may be cured, because it is so irrestible and violent a passion... yet without question, if it be taken in time, it may be helped, and by many good remedies amended. (III, 189)

In his first subsection, Burton considers cures "by Labour, Diet, Physic, Fasting, etc." Identical categories of cures may be found in almost any Renaissance medical book, and the remedies Burton puts forward in this subsection are largely drawn from the writings of others. Among them, "to be busy still, and, as Guianerius enjoins, about matters of great moment" (III, 190) appears to receive the approbation Burton always accords to cures by activity. Burton notes that the

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15. Samuel Johnson, A Dictionary of the English Language, London, 1755.

poor are free from love-melancholy because they "fare coarsely, work hard, go woolward and bare". This leads him to the subject of fasting and related cures:

> Guianerius therefore prescribes his patient "to go with hair-cloth next his skin, to go barefooted, and bare-legged in cold weather, to whip himself now and then, as monks do, but above all, to fast." (III, 191).

These somewhat desperate remedies are not necessarily Burton's own, for they are ascribed to Guianerius. But Guianerius is an author whose advice on keeping busy Burton has just quoted with apparent endorsement, and in the absence of any sign of disapproval, it is reasonable to assume that he cites Guianerius' further opinions because he seconds them. Burton makes great claims for fasting (as he does for most cures), calling it unconditionally "an all-sufficient remedy of itself." Jason Pratensis is quoted to the same effect. Speaking both as divine and physician, Burton adds:

> And 'tis indeed our Saviour's oracle, "This kind of devil is not cast out but by fasting and prayer," which makes the Fathers so immoderate in commendation of fasting. (III, 191)

The quotation of Scripture is followed immediately by an implied censure of the "immoderate" opinions of the Church Fathers. Nonetheless, Burton quotes several of the Fathers "in commendation of fasting".

> By this means those Pauls, Hilaries, Antonies, and famous anchorites subdued the lusts of the flesh; by this means Hilarion "made his ass, as he called his own body, leave kicking" (so Hierome relates of him in his life). (III, 191)

Hilarion's facetiousness (and Burton's) did not go unnoticed by Sterne, who appropriated this sentence for Tristram Shandy.[16] Burton records the dietic discipline of the Indian Brahmins and quotes Gordonius in favour of whipping, imprisonment, and a regiment of bread and water for "all young men" (presumably those whose love-melancholy spare diet will not cure).

> If imprisonment and hunger will not take them down, according to the directions of that Theban Crates, "time must wear it out; if time will not, the last refuge is an halter." (III, 191)

Is death by hanging then to be put in practice to save a distracted lover from his disease? Burton has led his readers to the point of rejecting his, or rather his authors' "good remedies". He knows he has: "But this, you will say, is comically spoken". Not "I confess", but "you will say": Burton makes his readers the arbitrators of the remedies which he himself has presented, presumably for their worth in curing love-melancholy. The open debate between the first and second persons is foreshadowed in the first words of the subsection: some say that love-melancholy is incurable (i.e. 'you say that the conventional remedies are foolish'), and some say that it may be amended ('Contrariwise, there are many good remedies'). The later eruption of direct dialogue discloses the doubleness always inherent in Burton's narrative voice, which combines spectator and actor, antic and physician. In this example, it is not clear whether only Crates' words are "comically spoken" or whether Burton's (or his readers') "But this" extends

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16. Tristram Shandy, ed. Work., pp. 583-84.

back to the opinions of Guianerius and includes even the words of Christ and the Fathers. Of course, the entire passage on fasting might be taken simply as a burlesque of unreasonable cures; but the joke would have to be at Burton's expense as well as that of Guianerius, Gordonius, and the immoderate Fathers. When Burton continues his argument under cover of a characteristically elusive "howsoever" ("Howsoever, fasting by all means must still be used"), his advice seems poised between good sense and absurdity.

Does Burton really have faith in the "opposite meats" that he goes on to enumerate out of Mizaldus and Lemnius? Soon he is commending a cup of wine, a full diet, and frequent copulation for those particular cases of love-melancholy in which, through the frustration of his desires, the patient has become despondent. Horace's lines in praise of parabilis Venus are quoted, and following them, a sentence from Jason Pratensis and an historical example:

> Excretio enim aut tollet prorsus aut lenit aegritudinem, as it did the raging lust of Ahasuerus, qui ad impatientem amoris leniendam, per singulas fere noctes novas puellas devirginavit. And to be drunk too by fits. (III, 193)

"Excretion either extinguishes or eases the affliction". In the case of Ahasuerus cited to support this rule, however, the relief of low spirits looks like the triumph of lust: "almost every night he took new maidenheads". Burton appears to be commending debauchery and drunkenness. As before, he catches himself and retreats: "but this is mad physic, if at all to be permitted". Again, it is impossible to gauge how far this

retraction extends, and again, in his following words on the permissable allowance of pleasure for lovers who have lost themselves through despair, Burton attempts to salvage some profit from his discourse. He summarizes:

> And as the melody of music, merriment, singing, dancing, doth augment the passion of some lovers, as Avicenna notes, so it expelleth it in others, and doth very much good. These things must be warily applied, as the parties' symptoms vary, and as they shall stand variously affected. (III, 193)

Sound advice, but perhaps not always effectual when neither men nor physic are ever wholly sound.

The final paragraph of this subsection, listing the principal pharmaceutical remedies for love-melancholy, written exclusively in Latin and sprinkled with technical terms and signs, might be expected to maintain a serious tone. Instead, it contains what appears to be more mad physic. One cure calls for the right testicle of a wolf to be rubbed and exhibited in oil, another for a powder to be made from the dried bodies of decapitated frogs.[17] Burton gives no indication of how these and his other "good remedies" are to be taken, but a melancholy reader would be well advised to take them cum grano salis.

In his verses to a Lady "Upon Mr. Burton's Melancholy", Henry King expressed the hope that his friend "never may have

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17. "... dexterum lupi testiculum attritum, et oleo vel aqua rosata [rorata?] exhibitum veneris taedium inducere scribit Alexander Benedictus... Verbena herba gestata libidinem extinguit, pulvisque ~~[que?]~~ ranae decollatae et exsiccatae" (III, 194). Sterne borrowed some of Burton's preparations for his own burlesque of remedium amoris in Tristram Shandy (ed. cit., pp. 592-93).

cause/ To be adjoudg'd by these Phantastick Lawes".[18] King's wish confirms that Burton's contemporaries were aware of the oddity of his treatise, but it sidesteps the question of how, should the lady fall melancholy, Burton's "Phantastick Lawes" are themselves to be "adjoudg'd" and applied. Burton's subsection on "Labour, Diet, Physic, Fasting, etc." presents a learned and humane (if occasionally whimsical) set of remedies and at the same time a burlesque of the received cures of love-melancholy. Burton's laws, if put into practice, may cure, or at least ease, through their actual medical efficacy; or, simply by persuading a reader that relief is possible, Burton may lead him to busy himself with hopes of his cure which of themselves may ease his mind. Even if the sufficiency of Burton's remedies must ultimately be belied, they may procure for a patient a relatively more sane and happy existence for a time.

Burton does not decree his laws solely for the practical management of a morbus chronicus, however. As he prescribes the conventional remedies, he also engages the reader on the level of inbred, ineradicable melancholy, at the level of passion, insanity, and death ("a halter must end it"). Only "phantastick lawes" and remedies "comically spoken" have force against this melancholy. Rabelais, citing Hippocrates, compares the practice of medicine to "un combat et farce jouée a trois personnages: le malade, le medicin, la maladie".[19] The combat is real, but also acted; duly

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18. v. supra, chap. 1, pp. 4-5.

19. Rabelais, Le Quart Livre, ed. Marichal, p.4.

ceremonious, but also comic. So too are the cures in Burton's Anatomy. Burton turns the treatment of melancholy into a self-regarding spectacle. A realization of the limits of "good rules and precepts" (III, 195), bound up as it is with a realization of the limits of human life, may conduce to one's abiding by the rules as by those of a game or as by the conventions of the stage. Burton transposes the elements of the conventionally real, of the laws of medical art, into the realm of the fantastic, the dreamlike, the playful, the surreal. This realm is the "new hospital" where Burton's cures, and the experience of reading the Anatomy of Melancholy "as literature", take place.

"... to anatomize this humour..."

Near the end of the preface, Burton declares that the "more serious intent" of his following discourse is "to anatomize this humour of melancholy, through all his parts and species, as it is an habit, or an ordinary disease, and that philosophically, medicinally, to show the causes, symptoms , and several cures of it" (I20). The question of seriousness aside, this is one promise that Burton appears indisputably to keep. As we shall see, however, his keeping it is not incompatible with his continuing the satire of the preface.

Unlike Timothy Bright, Burton wrote not a 'Treatise' but an 'Anatomy' of melancholy. The figurative meaning of anatomy, "detailed dissection or analysis", had been current in Latin

and English usage well before Burton used the word in this way on his title page. By recalling there the actual process of anatomy upon a body ("... Philosophically, Medicinally, Historically, opened & cut up"), Burton was keeping alive what had almost become a dead metaphor. Inside his treatise Burton pursues the analogy between intellectual and physical dissection beyond simple wordplay. Of the many vernacular and Latin anatomies of the Renaissance, none takes anatomy in so literal a sense as Burton's. The still novel process of anatomy upon a human body probably did not suggest to Burton the actual method or organization of his book; other systematic treatments of single subjects, unrelated to anatomy as such, provided him with immediate structural models. However, physical anatomy supplied him with one of the concrete images or ideas in terms of which he framed his entire fiction.

The melancholy Burton anatomizes is the name of a condition or humour, but it is also a body, or rather two bodies which Burton treats as one and the same: the body of knowledge about melancholy, and the body of mankind at all levels of human organization, from that of the individual body of the writer or reader to the aggregate bodies that men form in society, the family and the state, the "economical body" (107) and the "body politic" (86), respectively. Burton's project, he says, is "to anatomizes this humour... through all the members of this our Microcosmos" (38), and thus implicitly through all other cosmic and bodily levels also. The structure of Burton's treatise is not, of course,

provided by the features of the body itself, but by the parts of his subject: by the kinds, causes, symptoms, prognostics, and cures of melancholy and their subdivisions. Between the parts ("members") of the actual body and the partitions, members, sections, and subsections of his anatomy of melancholy, however, Burton suggests an equivalence. He proposes the identification metaphorically, but he does not extend it into an allegory; that is, he imagines himself as performing a physical dissection, but the members which he opens and cuts up are only occasionally those of the body itself ("Head Melancholy", for example) and are not meant to stand for its particular parts (as are, for example, the chapters in Ulysses).

Burton anatomizes man's microcosm in order to discover the constituents of his being, in particular to discover the nature and workings of his vital (or rather mortal) principle. The members he opens are composed of knowledge about man's condition.

> According to my proposed method, having opened hitherto these secondary causes, which are inbred with us, I must now proceed to the outward and adventitious, which happen to us after we are born. (I, 216)

> As a purly hunter, I have hitherto beaten about the circuit of the forest of this microcosm, and followed only those outward adventitious causes. I will now break into the inner rooms, and rip up the antecedent immediate causes which are there to be found. (I, 374)

Burton "opens", "beats about", "breaks into", and "rips up" the body according to the divisions of his analytic method. These particular verbs and/metaphors they introduce (from the

anatomy itself, from hunting, and from an activity that suggests the sacking of a castle) are all descriptive of the same process. In addition, they all have both abstract, rhetorical meanings as well as concrete ones. Burton's search for causes as a purly hunter, for example, is a dramatization of the rhetorical process of inventio, the finding of arguments pertinent to a given subject. His breaking into inner rooms is an intensified image of the action of Ramist method, according to which information on particular subjects is stored in or retrieved from logically isolated topics ('places'); when a Ramist 'ransacked his memory', he had a spatial model of its various storerooms in mind. The topics which Burton opens up to analysis (the subjects on which he discourses member by member) he imagines as places on the landscape of "this microcosm". Burton's metaphors are not merely rhetorical decorations; they reveal the consistency with which he conceives of himself as performing an anatomy (also represented as a search and as an assault) upon the body of mankind.[20]

Burton's anatomizing may best be understood with reference to two broad contexts: the generic one provided by Menippean

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20. Probably none of Burton's metaphors of rhetorical action is original. A spatial conception of rhetorical topics was common among practitioners of Ramist method. Thomas Wilson's The Rule of Reason (1551), for example, uses a hunting metaphor for place-finding (quoted by Walter Ong, S.J., Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue, Cambridge, Mass., 1958, p. 120). v. also David Renaker, "Robert Burton and Ramist Method", Renaissance Quarterly XXIV (1971), 210-20.

satire, particularly by the now familiar Hippocratic letters; and the rhetorical and logical one provided by the predominantly Ramist methodology of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Menippean Anatomy

We have seen that the Hippocratic letters describe Democritus as dissecting the bodies of animals in order to discover the nature and seat of bile, an excess of which he believed to cause madness in men. Democritus says to Hippocrates, in Burton's free translation from the "Epistle to Damagetus":

> I do anatomize and cut up these poor beasts, to see these distempers, vanities, and follies, yet such proof were better made on man's body, if my kind nature would endure it. (51)

No sooner does Democritus wish for a human body to anatomize than he begins a satirical survey of man's life according to a scheme furnished by man's several ages, in each of which he is found to be mad or miserable in some particular way. In a figurative sense, Democritus' anatomies are indeed "made on man's body". Burton actually represents Democritus as searching for human vanities and follies in the bodies of animals, a confusion his source does not quite indulge, although its implications are those that Burton renders explicit.

The elements of the fable of Democritus are so few and their narrative adornment so slight that the parallels between them are easily apprehended. For example, Democritus' physical removal from Abdera is an obvious image of his intellectual estrangement from the philosophy of life

prevailing within the city walls. The medical plot of the story, which includes Democritus' anatomies, symbolizes his search for the moral cause of the Abderites' folly. The bodies of the animals are clearly meant to represent the body of man and the body politic of Abdera. Democritus is situated apart from or above all of these bodies, and upon each he performs anatomies, literally or figuratively. Similarly, Democritus' laughter at the Abderites is philosophically interpreted in his speech to Hippocrates and medically symbolized by his writing a discourse on madness. Any one of Democritus' attributes or activities mirrors any other in theme and in structure. One seventeenth-century painting of the scene of Hippocrates' visit appropriately shows an ambidextrous Democritus dissecting a young deer with one hand and writing in his manuscript book with the other.[21] Democritus' anatomizing is an integral part of the Hippocratic story and focuses its themes just as his laughter, his supposed madness, and his study of madness do.

Despite the obvious congruity of the themes of the Hippocratic letters with those of Burton's Anatomy, and the direct use Burton makes of the story of Democritus, it is impossible to be certain whether or not Burton derived his idea for an anatomy of melancholy and his images of dissection from the activities of his fictional namesake. Direct borrowing or mere coincidence, it comes to the same thing.

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21. The painting is by Moeyart. v. supra, p. 200, n.33.

Even if Burton's preface had never been written or he had chosen to publish a 'Mirrour of Melancholy' under his own name instead of an 'Anatomy' of it as Democritus Jr., we would still be justified in regarding his work (if otherwise the same) as an anatomy in the Menippean tradition. We would discover in it the same complex of themes to be found in the Hippocratic letters and in many other Menippean works and perhaps ourselves supply the missing images of opening and dissection. Why?

The answer has to do with the structural and thematic integration of works of Menippean satire. Bakhtin has called attention to the "organic unity" of the various characteristics of Menippean works.[22] For him, the source of this unity is extra-literary, in the symbolism of the festivals of folk culture. Of the Hippocratic story of Democritus, Bakhtin remarks:

> We find here laughter, madness, and the dismembered body. The elements of this complex are, it is true, rhetorically abridged, but their ambivalence and mutuality have been sufficiently preserved.[23]

Preserved, that is, from their origins in carnival celebrations. We find the same complex of themes, of course, in Burton's Anatomy, including the image of a body divided into members. Needless to say, these themes are present in the Anatomy not in the form of archaic survivals but as elements of living art. Whether, relative to their supposed origins, they are

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22. Bahktin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, p. 97.

23. Bahktin, Rabelais and His World, p. 361.

"rhetorically abridged" or artistically elaborated by Burton (and by Rabelais and Sterne) is an open, and perhaps unimportant question. Likewise, whether "laughter, madness, and the dismembered body" are genetically related or not (and if so, where their genesis lies) is of less significance than the mere fact of their relation. Most theoretical approaches to Menippean satire do not take account of such relations at all. Frye, for example, simply states that Menippean satire (or 'anatomy', as he prefers to call the genre) "presents us with a vision of the world in terms of a single intellectual pattern".[24] He does not investigate the nature of the menippea's characteristic worlds or the characteristic patterns of their presentation. His theory does not adequately distinguish his own Anatomy from Burton's, or Burton's from those of Nashe, Stubbes, Zara, and others. His notion of anatomy does not identify what about it is specific to the Menippean genre.

There is room between Bakhtin's "dismembered body" and Frye's "single intellectual pattern" to say what is particularly Menippean about Burton's anatomizing. The essential formal principle of Menippean satire may be stated: dialogue without closure. When the Menippean satirist surveys the world (the cosmos, the body), he does so from perspectives (or by means of categories) which are incapable of resolution or fixity. He approaches the world through "the category of the limit of human understanding", in Kierkegaard's phrase, or through such congruent categories as the infinite (the

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24. Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, p. 307.

unfinalizable), the timeless, the indeterminable, and the unserious. Among themes that correspond to these fundamentally epistemological categories are: mental alienation and fragmentation (madness and melancholy); physical fragmentation (in the form, for instance, of atomistic and infinitarian cosmologies); ignorance (Pyrrhonic scepticism) and logical dualism; aberrant psychic states such as hallucinations, dreams, and ecstasies; and "jolly relativity" in the form of laughter and irony. Typical springs of narrative action include curiosity, quest, and trial; typical narrative modes, the travelogue, the philosophical dialogue, and the intellectual anatomy, all conceived of as intrinsically endless processes of opening up and discovery.

I make this hasty review to suggest points of analogy between the formal, philosophical, and thematic characteristics typical of the worlds patterned by Menippean satire. It should now be apparent that Burton's Anatomy differs from other (non-Menippean) intellectual dissections not only because it takes to greater lengths the imagery of anatomy, but because it is an anatomy of melancholy (i.e. of man, of the cosmos, in terms of melancholy, by which it differes from monographs on a particular delimitable disease that affects only a part of man and the world). Melancholy itself, "the character of mortality" (I, 144), a form of madness, and a stimulus to phantasy, presents a challenge to man's ordinary self-possession, a challenge which is objectified in the image of anatomical dissection of man's body. Burton's favourite topics, anxiety, depression, delirium, despair, immanent suicide or metamorphosis (e.g. lycanthropy),

daydreaming, religious enthusiasm, etc., present images of man altered from himself, or at the edge of his being as man. Burton anatomizes man's life at its points of crisis, when it reveals the limits that are intrinsic to its nature. To be melancholy, as Thomas Walkington writes, is to be "dead before the appointed time of death".[25] By anatomizing man as melancholy, Burton acts out on life's stage the post-mortem examination of the anatomy theatre. The Anatomy is a threshold dialogue between man and not-man, between the self and the other-than-self in all its forms. It is a dialogue between two bodies, those of the anatomist and his reader, each being the anatomist of the other and of himself. Anatomist and anatomized reflect the dual body of man in the menippea, living and dying, laughing and melancholy, sane and insane, wise and foolish together.[26] Burton's Anatomy enacts a drama in which every man plays the parts of both bodies (in which each man is both actor and spectator). The Anatomy's metaphors from the stage are in fact structurally parallel to those drawn from anatomy itself.

The survey of the world conducted in the preface does not cease to be either satirical or dialogical in the Anatomy's three partitions. Throughout, Burton's satire is rhetorically directed "against mankind" through the process of anatomy itself. The world "turned upside downward" (68)

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25. Thomas Walkington, Optick Glasse of Humours, London, 1607, p.65.

26. The phrase "the dual body" is Bahktin's.

of the preface becomes the world laid open, turned "inside outward" (27), discovered, in the treatise.

Burton's Method (I)

In the body of the Anatomy, Burton's anatomizing entails not only a dialogical relation between the anatomist and his subject, but an orderly method of cutting and arrangement. Burton's elaborate scheme of divisions and subdivisions notwithstanding, scholars have long debated whether or not the Anatomy prosecutes any kind of method or system at all. One speaks of a "trackless jungle",[27] another of the "mere affectation of method and judgment".[28] Alternatively, Osler has deemed the Anatomy "orderly in arrangement, serious in purpose",[29] and Fox has argued that "method and composition"[30] are the tools of Burton's creative response to the chaos of

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27. Herschel Baker, The Wars of Truth, Cambridge, Mass., 1952, p. 153.

28. T.E. Brown, "Robert Burton, A Causerie", p. 265.

29. Sir William Osler, "Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy", Yale Review, N.S. III (1914), 251-71, p. 252. Karl Josef Höltgen, "Robert Burtons Anatomy of Melancholy: Struktur und Gattunsproblematik im Licht der Ramistischen Logik", Anglia 94 (1976), 388-403, endorsing Osler, states: "Burton's use of Ramist method confirms his claim for the worth of his book as a scientific-medical work", p. 403.

30. Ruth Fox, The Tangled Chain, passim.

experience. Simon speaks of Burton's profound respect for scholastic practices and in the same breath of his display of useless analytic virtuosity.[31] Renaker has described Burton as a wayward follower of Peter Ramus, the principal progenitor of the idea of method in the sixteenth century.[32]

That scholars should differ is hardly surprising, given the contradictory statements Burton himself makes about his use of method.

> I have read many books, but to little purpose, for want of good method; I have confusedly tumbled over divers authors in our libraries, with small profit, for want of art, order, memory, judgment. (16)

The terms "art", "order", "memory", "judgment", and "method" had technical, rhetorical meanings for a seventeenth-century scholar in addition to their common ones. Burton's encounter with his books takes place without the mediation of rhetoric. Burton reads as desire or need prompt him, not as a treatise-writer but as a melancholic, for whom conventional ideas of purpose and profit have only limited meaning. The germ of Burton's transgression of the rules of treatise-making lies here. Instead of mending matters in his Anatomy, Burton lists among the faults of his prose ("'tis partly affected", he says):

> barbarism, Doric dialect, extemporanean style, tautologies, apish imitation, a rhapsody of rags gathered from several dunghills, excrements of authors, toys and fopperies confusedly tumbled out, without art, invention, judgment, wit,

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31. Jean-Robert Simon, Robert Burton, p. 422.

32. Renaker, "Robert Burton and Ramist Method".

> learning, harsh, raw, rude, phantastical, absurd, insolent, indiscreet, ill-composed... (26)

Elsewhere, however, Burton defends his manner of writing, with reference to his habit of quotation, in terms of the use he makes of method and composition. Of his "authors", he says:

> I make them pay tribute to set out this my Macaronicon, the method only is mine own; I must usurp that of Wecker e Ter., nihil dictum prius, methodus sola artificem ostendit, we can say nothing but what hath been said, the composition and method is ours only, and shows a scholar. (25)

Later, in a similar connection, he repeats this claim:

> Jason Pratensis prescribes eight rules, besides physic, how this passion may be tamed, Laurentius two main precepts, Arnoldus, Valleriola, Montaltus, Hildesheim, Langius, and others inform us otherwise, and yet all tending to the same purpose. The sum of which I will briefly epitomize (for I light my candle from their torches), and enlarge again upon occasion, as shall seem best to me, and that after mine own method. (III, 189)

Burton shows a concern for method at other points in his discourse also. Renaker and Fish have demonstrated that (as Burton himself affects to confess) the Anatomy does not accomplish the work of order it appears to promise, but they have provided only a partial accounting for its failure to do so. We shall find, as we look more closely at Burton's anatomical apparatus, that the various authorial and critical estimates of his method reflect another of the Anatomy's serio-comic antitheses, like those we have already observed in its title-page, persona, and preface.

The Synopses

Before the reader arrives from the preface at the first word of Burton's treatise proper, he must traverse eight pages

(in the original quarto) of the "Synopsis of the First Partition", in which the topics to be treated in the first partition are laid out in bracketed tables. Synoptic tables are prefixed to the second and third partitions as well. Even a modern reader accustomed to flow-charts, tree-diagrams, and stochastic processes is apt to find these tables staggeringly technical. As outlines they have been elaborated to the point where they obscure rather than clarify the material they present.[33] They suggest a scientist's monstrous dream of total explanation. Like Burton's title-page, his synopses, the image of the treatise itself, cross the border into self-parody. In attempting to order melancholy, they make order itself appear morbid and ridiculous.

Seen in historical context, of course, Burton's synoptic tables are not particularly unusual as such.[34] They were a common feature of sixteenth and early seventeenth-century expository works, particularly those of Ramist orientation. Their use was not confined to presenting the contents of a work; entire books were produced consisting of these tables alone. The Aeneid and the Bible, the arts of medicine, rhetoric, and logic, single subjects like the nature of the plague or the design and history of a particular work of art were set out in tabular form. When Ben Jonson's Subtle

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33. As Bridget Lyons observes, Voices of Melancholy, London, 1971, p. 148.

34. v. Ong, Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue, and Karl Josef Höltgen, "Die Synoptischen Tabellen in der medizinischen Literatur und die Logik Agricolas und Ramus", Sudhoffs Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften 49 (1965), 371-90.

offers to teach fencing to young Kastril in The Alchemist, he promises to show "my whole method/Drawn out in tables".[35]

No less than Subtle, Burton was capitalizing on an intellectual fashion and, again like Subtle, for his own ends. Burton's singularity emerges through the common diagrammatic shorthand of his age. His characteristic voice is not excluded by his synopses; it merely puts on the mask of a technical jargon. It was the aim of Ramus to subordinate rhetoric to logic and, insofar as method was concerned, to dispense with the speaker altogether. Ramist method is designed to eliminate the individual voice, just as, in a similar way, Baconian method is designed to erase the particularities of individual minds. Even if it were not immediately recognizable as the voice of the preface, the presence of a particular voice in Burton's synopses would be easily detected. The wordiness, shifting syntax, and immanent fragmentation of the catalogues that clutter his brackets disclose an impulsive and immethodical speaker. For example:

Hypochondriacal, or windy melancholy. Subs. 2.
- In body: Wind, rumbling in the guts, belly-ache, heat in the bowels, convulsions, crudities, short wind, sour and sharp belchings, cold sweat, pain in the left side, suffocation, palpitation, heaviness of the heart, singing in the ears, much spittle, and moist, etc.
- In mind: Fearful, sad, suspicious, discontent, anxiety, etc. Lascivious by reason of much wind, troublesome dreams, affected by fits, etc. (I, 129)

The impression of a tension between containment and explosion is inescapable, even in a single set of brackets. Rigor

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35. Ben Jonson, The Alchemist, IV, ii, 65-66.

and delirium oppose each other and sustain each other. There is madness in Burton's method. He not only disorders method, but methodizes disorder. Burton's synopses provide a map of the contents of consciousness in a way that Ramus never intended; they portray a mind on the brink of disintegration contemplating the forces that afflict it. They reveal intellectual and psychological drama in a commonplace, even tedious mode of discourse; they bring out the conflicts implicit even in a table of contents.

For all his openness to the darker side of man, Burton, like Sterne, keeps his effects light; he does so because of the darkness of his subject. The effect of Burton's synopses is one of burlesque, and his satiric technique is one common in Menippean works. Menippean satire has no single characteristic literary form of its own, only a relation of parody or distance - of dialogue - to other forms. The 'host' forms which Menippean satire parodies and inhabits are (or are made to seem) monological, i.e. grounded in epistemological and theological certainty. The Praise of Folly, for example, parodies the conventions of scholastic declamation, Lucian's True Story those of ancient and contemporary writers of history, and Burton's Anatomy those of the Ramist anatomy. Ramism proposes its dialectic as an intellectual skeleton key to all knowledge: it is "the art of arts", "the science of sciences". One of Ramus' followers, Bartholemew Keckermann, published his Systema Sytematum in 1613; another, Johann Alsted, his monumental Encyclopedia in 1620. The seventeenth-century preoccupation with method and the ambition to encylopedize knowledge were not confined to Ramists.[36] Bacon and Descartes,

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36. v. Neal W. Gilbert, Renaissance Concepts of Method, New York, 1960.

among others, conceived of method as the means to certainty in knowledge. In casting his treatise on melancholy in the form of a systematic anatomy, Burton seized on, and travestied, one of the main intellectual currents of his age.

Yet Burton appears to have been caught up in the contemporary enthusiasm for method as well as to have recognized the folly of any attempt to confine the (melancholy) world in a logical, complete, and voiceless system of knowledge. It is not possible to say whether he aspired to make a methodical work and "through weakness, folly, passion, discontent, ignorance" (122) found himself unable to achieve his aim, or whether he wished to ridicule the attempts of those who pretended to be able to systematize knowledge. Melancholy is the ruin of the former project, the triumph of the latter. Paradoxically, Burton's inability to write an orderly treatise allows him to indulge his hopeless passion for system on a vast scale; secure (if also unhappy) that his attempt must fail, he may methodize the world at his pleasure. We have noticed such enablement through self-denial once before in connection with Burton's Utopia. An inversion of the terms under which Burton the melancholic writes produces the formula for Burton the parodist, who must also play a gambit to win his advantage. As parodist, Burton successfully ridicules what he takes to be the false pretensions of systematic learning by filling up the form of a <u>summa</u> with knowledge in chaos and by giving himself up to melancholy fancies. In doing so, however, he must also take the part of chaos and melancholy against himself and his own gesture of parody. To attempt to ascertain Burton's intentions in regard to his use of method

is to exclude the possibility of his ambivalence, for intent can only take place within the assumptions of the monological, methodological discourse that the Anatomy denies. To describe 'what really happens in the Anatomy' is, fortunately, another matter.

Generals and Particulars

In what, precisely, does Burton's method as such consist? Burton describes one of its main points as he opens the second partition:

> I will proceed, using the same method in the cure, which I have formerly used in the rehearsing of the causes; first general, then particular; and those according to their several species. (II, 5)

To proceed from 'generals' to 'particulars' is a principal feature of the method of Ramus. It ensures a logical relation between parts of a discourse and enables a writer or reader to find his way backwards and forwards in any argument. Burton follows this scheme throughout his treatise. He is continually "descending" from generals to particulars. As Fish observes, however, he often does so without first resolving the generals from which he descends:[37] he escapes to particulars in default of establishing the general positions from which they should logically derive. An example may prove helpful; unfortunately, the involved nature of Burton's prose does not permit it to be a brief one.

The generality upon whose understanding all else depends in the Anatomy is that of melancholy itself. Burton devotes an entire subsection, "Definition of Melancholy, Name, Difference", to a consideration of it. He begins:

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37. Stanley Fish, Self-Consuming Artifacts, p. 336.

> I may now freely proceed to treat of my intended subject, to most men's capacity; and after many ambages, perspicuously define what this melancholy is, show his name and differences. The name is imposed from the matter, and disease denominated from the material cause: as Bruel observes, Μελανχολία quasi Μέλαινα χολή from black choler. And whether it be a cause or an effect, a disease or a symptom, let Donatus Altomarus and Salvianus decide; I will not contend about it. It hath several descriptions, notations, and definitions. Fracastorius... (I, 169)

Twenty-four authors and somewhat fewer definitions and descriptions are named in the composite picture of melancholy that follows. Donatus Altomarus, Salvianus, and their fellow physicians do not decide, however. What one adds, another denies, and yet another defends. "The common sort", Burton writes,

> define it to be "a kind of dotage without a fever, having for his ordinary companions fear and sadness, without any apparent occasion." So doth Laurentius... (I, 169-170)

Six more authorities are cited in support of the "common sort". Nevertheless, the case is not closed:

> Which common definition, howsoever approved by most, Hercules de Saxonia will not allow of, nor David Crusius, Theat. morb. Herm. lib. 2 cap. 6: he holds it unsufficient, "as rather showing what it is not, than what it is", as omitting the specifical difference, the phantasy and the brain. (I, 170)

Logically, the prose has arrived at an impasse. Invention has done its part; now Burton's judgment must act. Once more, however, he does not contend about it: "but I descend to particulars".

The process of opinion-gathering is now repeated as Burton hammers out a definition of melancholy word by word. The principal part of the brain must be depraved, Burton notes,

> to distinguish it from folly and madness (which Montaltus makes angor animi, to separate) in which those functions are not depraved, but rather abolished. (I, 170)

Montaltus calls the very process of distinguishing one mental disease from another angor animi, "anguish of the mind", which is itself one of the definitions of melancholy which Burton has just quoted, in Latin and English, from Aretaeus. Defining melancholy causes melancholy. "'Fear and sorrow'", Burton continues, "make it differ from madness; 'without a cause' is last inserted, to specify it from all other ordinary passions of 'fear and sorrow'". If this is, at least momentarily, logically clear, Burton's subsequent analysis of the causes of melancholy, in which he shows how "ordinary passions" gain control of the mind, traduces this definition. Passions should not rule the mind, of course, and their effects (among them madness) may outrun the particular circumstances which have occasioned them; but only in this special sense can the melancholy that Burton anatomizes be said to be without a cause, or a "just cause" as he once puts it. In his first edition, Burton concluded his definition of melancholy this way:

> Feare and Sorrow are the true Characters, and inseparable companions of Melancholy, as hereafter shall be declared.[38]

The second and all later editions read:

> Fear and sorrow are the true characters and inseparable companions of most melancholy, not all, as Hercules de Saxonia, tract. posthumo de Melancholia, cap. 2, well

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38. Burton, Anatomy of Melancholy, 1621, I, 47.

> excepts; for to some it is most pleasant, as to such as laugh most part; some are bold again, and free from all manner of fear and grief, as hereafter shall be declared. (I, 170)

After 1621, an exception unravels the end of Burton's definition and points up the inconclusiveness that attends every stage of its construction. Burton cannot define because he cannot rest in any point that declares itself final. All his attempts in the Anatomy to express the general and the finite founder, like his "perspicuous" general definition of melancholy, in ambages and contradictions.

Instead of combating this tendency toward fragmentation, Ramism unexpectedly encourages it. Ong has shrewdly observed that "by insisting on the absolute monarchy of definition and division in all cognition, Ramus is really equipped to explain nothing but disintegration".[39] Ramist method is thus well-suited to articulating a vision of the world like Burton's, in which the integrating principle is itself one of disintegration and disorder.

The relation between the general and the particular in the Anatomy is effectively not logical but figurative. Burton knows only one generality (melancholy in its indefinite, unlimited sense), of which there are infinite particulars. "They dote all, but not all alike" (46): the kinds of dotage (of melancholy), Burton says, are as many as there are men affected, "Scarce two of two thousand that concur" (I, 397).

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39. Ong, p. 208.

Further yet: in each man the infinity of kinds is potentially present.

> They will act, conceive all extremes, contrarieties, and contradictions, and that in infinite varieties. (I, 397)

As I have remarked before, every kind, case, and symptom is a metonymy for mankind's "one disease".

> Proceed now a partibus ad totum, or from the whole to the parts, and you shall find no other issue. (78)

Every part contains the whole and may itself be anatomized into further parts. However Burton arranges his material according to the principles of art and method, metonymy provides the underlying pattern of his fiction. Ramist method matches this pattern only superficially. It generates particulars by a process of logical division and isolation. Burton too differentiates particulars, but as they happen to catch his all-seeing eye or as they have particular names. Whether made by Burton or by language for him, Burton's particulars are arbitrary divisions within a total field. They are all different, but also all the same. There is in them "similitudo dissimilis, like men's faces, a disagreeing likeness still" (I, 397), as Burton describes the symptoms of melancholy. The structure of Burton's logical method and that of his literary vision are thus fundamentally at odds.

Dichotomy

Along with the scheme of generals and particulars, another of the most important features of Ramist method, division by dichotomy, is also manifest in the Anatomy's

tables and exposition. That Burton considers such dichotomizing essential to his method is evident from his own words as well as from his practice. Coming to discuss "Symptoms of Religious Melancholy", he writes:

> The parties affected are innumerable... of all sorts and conditions. For method's sake I will reduce them to a twofold division, according to those two extremes of excess and defect, impiety and superstition, idolatry and atheism... Zanchius reduceth such infidels to four chief sects; but I will insist and follow mine own intended method. (III, 318-19)

The most obvious of Burton's reasons for adopting this twofold division is the order that it imposes on a diversity of matter. The practical bias of Ramist method, which sought to make knowledge accessible even to the "mediocriter doctis" by means of logical simplification, was well in line with Burton's objectives in writing for "the common good of all", i.e. for the educated English public.[40]

If Burton prosecutes method for its practical value, however, he does so without clear success. It appears that he looked upon Ramist method with a particular view to its making tractable the complicated art of medicine. The book that Burton mentions in connection with his own method, Johann Jacob Wecker's Medicae Syntaxes,[41] was one of the first sixteenth-century attempts to methodize medicine along Ramist lines. Burton discusses Wecker's and others' methods in his subsection "Concerning Physic". Faced with the "divers

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40. Hugh Kearney, Scholars and Gentlemen, London, 1970, chap. III, provides an account of the reception of Ramism in England and discusses the practical appeal of Ramist method.

41. First published in Basel, 1562, the edition owned by Burton. On Wecker v. Höltgen, "Die Synoptischen Tabellen", p. 385.

and infinite" kinds of medicines, Burton turns confidently toward method. "Physicians have invented method and several rules of art", he declares, "to put these remedies in order for their particular ends" (II, 20). The particulars of method, however, are themselves diverse. There is no method of method: "Several prescripts and methods I find in several men". One physician sets down "nine peculiar scopes or ends" pertaining to the cure of melancholy, another "seven especial canons", still others their own "several injunctions and rules". Methods have replaced medicines as the agents of disorder. Characteristically, Burton recoups:

> The ordinary is threefold, which I mean to follows: Διαιτητική, Pharmaceutica, and Chirurgica... which Wecker, Crato, Guianerius, etc., and most, prescribe; of which I will insist, and speak in their order. (II, 21)

Despite his claims in the preface, Burton's method as such is neither his own (since he shares it with the other physicians whom he follows and from whom he borrows), nor is it strictly methodical, since it is two-fold or three-fold (or more) as Burton sees fit to make it, according to the demands of particular subjects. Burton's method is his own only insofar as he departs from method, only as he gives his treatise and the diversity of matter it rehearses his own particular voice. That voice is digressive, impulsive, ironical, and skilled in the rhetorical arts that Ramist dialectic was designed to exclude from discourse.[42]

The Ramist scheme of dichotomies must have had more than just practical appeal for Burton. Like the rule of generals

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42. Renaker, p. 220.

and particulars, it corresponds, at least on the surface, to a pattern inherent in Burton's view of the world. Ramism constructs its maps by drawing pairs of opposites out of single ideas. As we have frequently observed, two-sidedness is endemic to Burton's world. Parodical doubles (doctor and antic, for example) and mirror-image pairs (Puritan and Papist) abound in the Anatomy. Ramist method serves Burton in somewhat the same way as the chessboard serves Carroll in Through the Looking Glass, as a binary landscape. Burton appropriates Ramus' map to represent the dialogue between two persons in schematic form, as if the 'vertical' interaction between two levels or bodies (between 'I' and 'thou', observer and observed) could be projected in the form of a series of logical oppositions in a single plane, on a single body. No doubt Burton's dichotomous habits of mind are those of a university scholar trained in disputation and those of a would-be simplifier of knowledge; but the pro et contra of academic debate and the methodological disposition of paired ideas are the instruments, not the causes, of Burton's preoccupation with doubles and dialogue. Ramist method, in some respects alien to the seriocomic, is in others ideally suited to penetration by it.

Burton's Method (II)

The threat to method that is adumbrated in the Anatomy's synoptic tables is realized in its exposition. Burton himself perceives that his ambition to order the world is at

odds with his vision of its ungovernable chaos. He acknowledges the difficulties his method leads him into:

> Who can distinguish these melancholy symptoms so intermixed with others, or apply them to their several kinds, confine them into method? 'Tis hard, I confess: yet I have disposed of them as I could, and will descend to particularize them according to their species. (I, 408)

As a framework for his discourse, method is useful to Burton, but as a means of truly describing man's nature, of "confining" the symptoms of his condition by system or art, it must necessarily fail.

> What physicians say of distinct species of melancholy in their books it much matters not, since that in their patients' bodies they are commonly mixed. In such obscurity, therefore, variety, and confused mixture of symptoms, causes, how difficult a thing it is to treat of several kinds apart; to make any certainty or distinction among so many casualties, distractions, when seldom two men shall be like affected per omnia! (I, 177)

Burton's Anatomy, however, is laid out according to a scheme that depends for its validity on the existence of such species and on the possibility of isolating them: depends, that is, for its methodological validity on these things. The Anatomy's validity as a work of literature, on the other hand, does not so much compensate for its shortcomings as a scientific treatise as in some measure require them. If human experience could be "confined into method", there would be no need for literature or for an Anatomy of Melancholy.

Burton's solution to his methodological dilemmas is to admit the great difficulty of his endeavour and then to proceed to his self-assigned task with heroic but wholly unfounded determination. The passage just quoted continues:

> 'Tis hard, I confess, yet nevertheless I will adventure through the midst of these perplexities, and, led by the clue or thread of the best writers, extricate myself out of a labyrinth of doubts and errors, and so proceed to the causes. (I, 177)

No criterion for determining "the best writers" is ever established, of course. Burton promises not to relieve "these perplexities", only to adventure into the midst of them, with the inevitable result that he discovers obscurity and confusion. Burton reveals in the world of knowledge uncertainties which are in effect produced by his own anxiety and irresolution. He sows doubt and error where he claims to avoid them. Despite his predictions, his prospects have not improved when he has proceeded to causes; almost two-hundred pages further along the road of method, he returns to the same metaphor of the labyrinth:

> In this labyrinth of accidental causes, the farther I wander, the more intricate I find the passage; multae ambages, and new causes offer themselves as so many by-paths to be discussed. To search out all, were an Herculean work, and fitter for Theseus; I will follow mine intended thread, and point out only some few of the chiefest. (I, 357)

Burton finds himself in the plight of Kafka's imperial messenger: the further he proceeds, the more difficult the way becomes, until he is not sure whether he will ever accomplish his journey and deliver his message. Burton's method is both the thread by which he seeks to extricate himself from the labyrinth and the labyrinth itself.

Renaker justly remarks that Burton "took a curious revenge on Ramus", although his supposal of Burton's innocence

in doing so is open to question.[43] Renaker locates Burton's misuse of Ramist method principally in his concentrating on the Ramist practice of "sorting ideas into convenient groups" to the point of neglecting to observe the logical relations which should obtain between groups.[44] Thus what Burton affirms in one place he may deny in another, according to the context. Renaker suggests that Burton "felt free to regard each part of his world, for the moment he was treating it, as an absolute".[45] He does not explain why Burton valued this freedom, except as it enabled Democritus Jr. to "strut and fret his hour" within the confines of each subsection.[46] Every part of Burton's world does have absolute extension, but the cells of the subsections are not especially privileged units of Burton's drama or of his division of his subject. On the contrary, a reader barely registers that he has passed from one cell to the next, because only the single (if universal) cell of melancholy has discrete (if indefinite) meaning in the Anatomy. The contradictions from subsection to subsection, or within particular subsections, simply reproduce those inherent in the absolute category of melancholy or (what comes to the same thing) those generated by the dialogical process of anatomy. The subject of each subsection, moreover, is anatomized in the same manner as the

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43. ibid., p. 220 and p. 210.

44. ibid., p. 220.

45. ibid., p. 219.

46. ibid., p. 220.

larger units of Burton's treatise.

"Mon dessein est divisible partout", writes Montaigne in "De la Vanité".[47] Montaigne's design of self-portraiture unifies his Essais; whatever subject he takes up, it is always himself that he divides and which is the true subject of his trials. Montaigne essays himself as a particular man from particular angles, but at the same time in respect of his "estre universel". The structure of Burton's Anatomy is similar: every topic is at once local and universal, a part in respect of a body.

In a sense, Burton's world is already divided before he dissects it. The process of anatomy is not so much applied to man's nature as it grows out of it. The humour of melancholy itself divides man from himself; anatomy is a projection of the fragmentariness of man's life. Burton repeatedly attempts to constitute the body of man as whole and sound (in Utopia, in Paradise, and in every normative statement he makes), only to see it repeatedly disintegrate into a melancholy body. The body fades away to its humour, in the manner of the Cheshire Cat. The sound body is indivisible; it is Deo congruens. The melancholy body, however, is infinitely divisible, since melancholy, or humour, is itself a principle of internal difference.

As with the melancholy body, so with the body of knowledge about it. "Knowledge, like matter, he would affirm, was

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47. Montaigne, Essais, III, ix, ed. cit., p. 955.

divisible in infinitum", says Tristram Shandy of his father.[48] For the humorist, knowledge is limited but not fixed; it can no more grasp its object than the arrow of Zeno's paradox of motion can arrive at its target. Humour has an unlimited power of assimilating that which is other to it but has no power to escape from itself. "Make how many kinds you will", says Burton, "divide and subdivide, few men are free" (47). The freedom to make kinds of melancholy is coupled with an inability to see the world except in terms of melancholy, its "one disease".

Invention, Quotation, and Fiction

In one respect, the apparatus of Burton's Anatomy is designed to make it a working treatise (thus cures answer causes and topics are cross-referenced); in another, however, Burton's anatomizing enacts the failure of his treatise to 'work' in conventional ways. Burton's Anatomy, like Democritus' inquiry into madness, is an attempt to "find out the seat of this atra bilis" (20): to find out the nature of man. The "seat" of melancholy, however, eludes Burton. He finds everything but the explanation in view of which he could cease his search. His inventory of man (Latin invenire, 'to find') is a 'negative result' of monstrous proportions.

To make an inventory is to quote. Burton's entire Anatomy may, in fact, be approached from the point of view of

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48. Sterne, Tristram Shandy, ed. Work, p. 145.

the poetics of quotation. It has become commonplace to observe that all texts are composed of quotations from other texts.[49] This proposition, which strikes the ear with the force of paradox, is perhaps self-evident: any text must make use of a received language in order to make itself understood. Most literature permits us to take its quotation of language and of other literature more or less for granted or introduces "familiar" quotations (or misquotations) for local effect, as Eliot does, for example, in The Wasteland. Some works, even some genres of literature, however, use quotation in ways that display the mechanism of quotation by which all literature functions. The minor poetic genre of the cento (in which a poem is composed entirely out of verses from other poems) is an obvious example. Menippean satire is another. In it, as Bakhtin observes, the represented word first takes its place beside the representational word in European literature.[50]

In Menippean satire, the difference (implicit in all literature) between the words of an author and those which he quotes is brought to the fore. In all narrative, Julia Kristeva argues, including that of history and science,

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49. For example, Julia Kristeva, Semeiotikè, Paris, 1969, p. 146: "tout texte s'écrit comme mosaique de citations"; Roland Barthes, Image, Music, Text, trans. Stephen Heath, New York, 1977, p. 146; "The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture".

50. Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, p. 89.

a dialogical relation between narrator and reader potentially obtains, simply by virtue of the fact that communication demands the participation of two persons. "Yet", she writes,

> it is only through certain narrative structures (those of carnival, the menippea, and the polyphonic novel) that this dialogue, this possession of the sign as double, this ambivalence of writing, is exteriorized.[51]

Exteriorized: made manifest by a variety of structural and metadiscursive features, turned inside out, anatomized.

The book consisting entirely of quotations, projected by Flaubert, called for by Walter Benjamin, and conjured up in stories and fictional reviews by Borges, was written, in idea if not quite to the letter, by Robert Burton. After his own fashion, Burton was proclaiming 'the literature of exhaustion', 'the anxiety of influence', and 'intertextuality' in 1621. Burton discusses the related matters of quotation and invention in his preface:

> Cardan finds fault with Frenchmen and Germans, for their scribbling to no purpose; Non, inquit, ab edendo deterreo, modo novum aliquid inveniant, he doth not bar them to write, so that it be some new invention of their own; but we weave the same web still, twist the same rope again and again; or if it be a new invention, 'tis but some bauble or toy which idle fellows write, for as idle fellows to read, and who cannot so invent? (24)

Every writer, according to Burton, is caught between the evils of repetition and novelty. In fact, no writer escapes either hazard. "New invention" may be taken both as a tautology and as a contradiction in terms. Invention

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51. Kristeva, Semeiotikè, p. 158; my trans.

involves not a creation e nihilo but a selection of the received topics for writing, or at the least, a selection of received language, a 'finding' of arguments and words. To invent is to reweave the web that others have already woven. Every text bears a relation of similarity and difference to any other, no matter how the common rope is twisted.

Burton not only recognizes this circumstance of writing but provides a keen analysis of it as it affects the composition of his own book. After a page of satire against literary theft, and several admissions of complicity, Burton turns to the differences between his work and those of others.

> For my part I am one of the number, nos numerus sumus; I do not deny it, I have only this of Macrobius to say for myself, Omne meum, nihil meum, 'tis all mine, and none mine. As a good housewife out of divers fleeces weaves one piece of cloth, a bee gathers wax and honey out of many flowers, and makes a new bundle of all, Floriferis ut apes in saltibus omnia libant, I have laboriously collected this cento out of divers writers. (24-25)

In his first edition, Burton claimed that the newness of his bundle consisted only in his "composition and method":

> I have laboriously collected this Cento out of many Authors, the method onely is mine owne, and I must vsurpe that of Wecker e Terentio, nihil dictum quod non dictum prius, methodus sola artificem ostendit, we can say nothing but what hath beene said, the composition and method is ours onely, and shewes a scholler.[52]

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52. Burton, Anatomy, 1621, p. 9.

By the third edition, Burton had interpolated into this passage a subtler analysis of the way in which he makes the Anatomy his own:

> I have laboriously collected this cento out of divers writers... The matter is theirs most part, and yet mine, apparet unde sumptum sit (which Seneca approves), aliud tamen quam unde sumptum sit apparet; which nature doth with the aliment of our bodies, incorporate, digest, and assimilate, I do concoquere quod hausi, dispose of what I take. I make them pay tribute to set out this my Macaronicon, the method only is mine own; I must usurp that of Wecker... (25)

The degree to which Burton's disposition of his matter is unique to him is not exceptional, save as it involves the wresting of all knowledge from whatever context to set out a treatise on melancholy. By "composition and method" however, Burton probably refers simply to the arrangement of his matter; in Ramist method, dispositio is inventio in reverse.[53] In claiming to "dispose of what I take", Burton may just be quoting an acceptable rhetorical formula for the purposes of self-defence. Whatever rhetorical meanings this phrase carries, however, Burton's alimentary metaphor supersedes them. The organic transformation Burton works upon his matter by his style (through his body), a style that transgresses the rules of rhetoric, is the principal agency of his disposition (and dis-positioning) of the words of others. Burton's attempt to transfer the fleeces of other authors into his book merely by a process of selection and composition fails for

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53. Ong, Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue, p. 114.

the same reason that he cannot locate the seat of melancholy. The process of invention and the search for the nature of disease both reflect the unfinished, dialogical character of language and of self-knowledge.

Burton's prose is a triumph of assimilation, but it expresses Burton's particular self only at his own expense. The personal stamp he puts upon the matter he incorporates is characterized by dismemberment and difference, by the very absence of a unified and univocal self. Burton's matter is his only insofar as he does not belong to himself. Likewise, it is "most part theirs" only insofar as Burton's authors also appear other than themselves ("aliud quam unde sumptum sit apparet"). Burton's authors cannot be themselves both by virtue of their madness (as Burton goes on to prove), but also, in precise analogy to their mental disequilibrium, because they have no more claim to originality than Burton. Burton's and his authors' words are alike born from and become part of the great "chaos and confusion of books" (24).

Not only words, but, as Emerson writes, books, plots, and characters may also be quoted.[54] Of the Anatomy's many quotations, those of the Renaissance medical book and the Ramist anatomy are the most extensive. Embedded in these are lesser quotations of Renaissance genres such as treatises of the complexions, of demonology, and of love,

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54. Ralph Walso Emerson, "Quotation and Originality", in Collected Works, New York, 1917, VIII, 175-204.

the sermon, the consolatio, the character, the utopia, and the cosmic voyage.[55] In them, in turn, anecdotes, opinions of authors, fragments of poetry, and technical information are quoted. As performed by Democritus Jr., however, the act of quotation re-orients the elements that compose the orthodoxy of the Renaissance book of knowledge towards (through) the melancholy subject. Every quotation that Democritus Jr. makes, of words or of whole forms, is at some level garbled by melancholy or unsteadied by the ambivalence of language. The Anatomy is the reader's digest of an author at odds with (and yet also at one with) the whole corpus of received literature and knowledge.

Usually, Burton's borrowings carry visibly upon them the signature of their re-orientation in his pages (in the form of disorderly syntax, excessive documentation, contradiction, and the like). Even when Burton's prose is not strongly marked by the disruptive characters of his style, however, the borrowings it contains do not go unassimilated and are not merely representational. Burton's repetition of the commonplaces of knowledge and form is qualified by the wider context of his discourse (its satirical frame, the melancholy of narrator and reader). When, for example, Burton presents his anatomy of the soul in the language of faculty psychology, or gathers receipts for preparatives and purgers, though the terms of his discussions are thoroughly

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55. v. Rosalie Colie, The Resources of Kind, Berkeley, 1973, p. 80.

conventional, they lose their transparency in his pages. Burton detaches language from its objects and makes it the material of an album. Not merely the passions of the mind or the powers of the stars, but their particular names and the entire scientific and moral mythology which arranges their meanings are displayed in Burton's Anatomy, simply by "rehearsal" (Burton's word for 'repetition') on the Anatomy's "common theatre".

The dialogical relation of similarity and difference composed by the frame of the Anatomy manifests itself throughout the book in the fabric of Burton's prose. Burton calls his book a "Macaronicon" (25), after the poem of that name in Italian 'dog Latin' by Teofilo Folegno. Folegno had added Latin endings to vernacular roots; Burton mixes his languages on the page instead of in the word. In the Anatomy, the language of learning (in italics in Burton's text) jostles against a colloquial English style. When Burton translates or paraphrases his Latin quotations, he does so not merely to make himself understood to less educated readers, but for the pleasure of repeating himself (and the authors he quotes) in a different and lower key. For example, quoting Philip Beroaldus, "that great Bononian doctor", on his love affairs, Burton relates:

> I could not abide marriage, but as a rambler, erraticus ac volaticus amator (to use his own words) per multiplices amores discurrebam, I took a snatch where I could get it. (III, 248-49)

Beroaldus' "own words" do not remain wholly his own, for Burton's translation sinks them to a level more proper to

the great doctor's casual passions, the companions of his love-melancholy. Similarly, in his "Consolatory Digression", Burton places the saws of classical wisdom on the same footing with the homely proverbs to be found on "cheese-trenchers and painted cloths" (II, 205). Burton writes neither a Latin tractate De Melancholia (such as he claimed, probably speciously, to have intended to produce, until foiled by "mercenary stationers" [30]), nor a strict translation of Latin treatises into English. Instead he straddles both languages.

Burton's macaronic mixes not only Latin and English but various levels and codes within both languages. Burton dissolves the boundaries that conventionally divide words and styles.[56] A quotation from Tertullian is succeeded by the catch from a ballad, both made equal by their common orientation toward the behaviour of melancholics. The jargon of astrology and the verses of Catullus stand side by side in an account of the symptoms of love. Burton consoles language of its Babel by collecting its various tongues into one book. He masters language by rehearsing its confusion in his own distracted voice, just as he integrates the

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56. When Sir Thomas Bodley founded his library at Oxford, he excluded what he called "riff-raff books" (popular literature) from its shelves. In his Anatomy, Burton transgressed the principles of the library in which he often worked, and in his will he supplemented its collection by the bequest of a personal library containing, besides scholarly volumes, playbooks, almanacs, jest books, broadsides, and the like.

confusion of life through the category of melancholy.[57]

In 1620, Francis Bacon wrote:

> First then, away with antiquities, and citations or testimonies of authors; also with disputes and controversies and differing opinions; everything in short which is philological. Never cite an author except in a matter of doubtful credit: never introduce a controversy unless in a matter of great moment.[58]

No book flouts these precepts on a grander scale than Burton's; but Burton's method is no less subversive of the practices of Renaissance scholarship than Bacon's. Both men react to the same crisis in knowledge. What Bacon banishes, Burton exaggerates. Bacon sweeps the authors and antiquities away; Burton gathers as many as he can into the museum of his book.

In the Anatomy, where all matters are (in Bacon's phrase) "of doubtful credit", contention among authorities rarely abates. "Some difference I find amongst authors, about the principal part affected in this disease" (I, 170), writes Burton at the head of a page of carefully discriminated controversy. Burton is always ready to cry "Eia Socrates! Eia Xanthippe!" (64).

> Crato, Erastus, and the Galenists oppugn Paracelsus; he brags on the other side, he did more famous cures by this means than all the Galenists in Europe, and calls himself a monarch; Galen, Hippocrates, infants,

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57. Burton once draws an explicit parallel between the signs of language and those of disease: "The tower of Babel never yielded such confusion of tongues, as the chaos of melancholy doth variety of symptoms" (I, 397).

58. Francis Bacon, Parasceve ad Historiam Naturalem et Experimentalem, in Works, ed. R. Spedding and R.L. Ellis, London, 1857-74, IV, p. 254.

> illiterate, etc.... Erastus and the rest of the Galenists vilify them on the other side, as heretics in physic: "Paracelsus did that in physic, which Luther in divinity." "A drunken rogue he was, a base fellow, a magician, he had the devil for his master, devils his familiar companions, and what he did was done by the help of the devil." (II, 240-41)

Here, the "difference amongst writers" emerges as a cursing match between the two rival camps of late sixteenth-century medicine. As I have previously noted,[59] the 'brawl of philosophers' is a topos of Menippean satire (Varro: Logomachia, Andabatae; Lucian, Icaromenippus; Swift, The Battle of the Books). The passage just quoted conludes:

> Thus they contend and rail, and every mart write books pro and con, et adhuc sub judice lis est; let them agree as they will, I proceed. (II, 241)

Burton finds, not resolves differences. Even when he chooses to adjudicate, moreover, his voice carries no particular privilege and is often lost in the heap of its own erudition.

For all the "doubtful credit" that pervades his discourse, Burton is not a sceptic of any school. His doubt expresses itself through a misplaced zeal for knowledge. Burton practices what Montaigne called (with reference to Aristotle's copious citation of other authors) "un Pyrrhonisme soubs une forme resolutive", 'a Pyrrhonism in affirmative form".[60] Burton determines nothing, but records everything. He cannot discover Truth with a capital 'T'. His truths are

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59. v. supra, p. 59.

60. Montaigne, Essais, ed. Rat and Thibaudet, II, XII, p. 487.

all quoted: they are "truths". Quotation marks frame them just as the preface frames the treatise. Burton is the arch-philologist that Bacon decries: a collector not of facts but of others' words, of languages and opinions, of voices, of lore.

In The Discarded Image, C.S. Lewis noted Burton as an author who continued the medieval habit of failing to distinguish between the nature of source material.[61] He observed that Burton puts myth and romance on the same footing as history and science and cited the section of the Anatomy dealing with sexual perversions, where Burton recalls the stories of Pasiphae and Pygmalion alongside Bale's account of the English monasteries (III, 50-51). More than the credulity with which Burton is often taxed is involved in this quaint eclecticism. Writing in the last century, Henry Hallam accused Burton of being a collector

> of stories far more strange than true, from those records of figments, the old medical writers of the sixteenth century, and other equally deceitful sources.[62]

Deceitfully or not, the "old medical writers" do indeed furnish figments and strange stories to Burton, for to him there is nothing human that cannot be read (or written) as an emblem of man's estranged conditon: as a cause, symptom, or cure of melancholy. What a Baconian would consider truths of experience are already symbolic to Burton. What a scientific mind would classify as myth and fable represents

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61. C.S. Lewis, The Discarded Image, Cambridge, 1964, pp. 31-32.

62. Henry Hallam, Introduction to the Literature of Europe, London, 1837-39, II, p. 251.

for Burton only one more stratum of the fiction that mankind is continually writing about himself. Madness and the institution of language render all sources, facts, and figments equally veracious or equally fabulous. In their progress across "the forest of this microcosm", narrator and reader traverse a figurative landscape whose places are the creations of mankind's collective poeisis. Like the narrator of Lucian's Vera Historia, Burton has "nothing true to record";[63] he can write down only true stories.

> These are tales, you will say, but they have most significant morals, and do well express those ordinary proceedings of doting lovers. (III, 113)

Burton levitates all he finds into fiction; or rather, he can find only fictions. His words possess the ambiguity of the objet trouvé: their merely being found (framed) invests them with a more or less enigmatic significance.

A book that was early thought fantastical, when the world of its classical and Renaissance reference was still current, has become all the more singular with the lapse of familiarity with that world. Already for Hallam the medical science of the sixteenth century had become "records of figments". Our ignorance, as common readers, of the commonplaces of seventeenth-century learning allows Burton the creator to eclipse Burton the compiler. With the advance of scientific knowledge and the exchange of new myths

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63. v. supra, p. 81.

for old, the myths of which the Anatomy is composed (e.g., the system of humoral psychology) show up all the more clearly as myths, stained by the passage of time. Three-hundred-and-fifty years effect no intrinsic changes in Burton's text, however, which contains its own necessarily synchronous reading. The preface of the Anatomy explicitly denies the reality of temporal change.[64] Written sub specie aeternitatis, the Anatomy always takes place in the present, for the present is a time outside of time, as it is the time of writing and reading.[65]

The "Digression of Air"

Man's body may not be whole, but a complete analysis of its disease may be attempted. Only attempted: Burton's inventory cannot transcend the limits imposed by its subject. It can only transfer them to the printed page. His discourse, a rhetorical invention sustained by the impossibility of attaining its object (of making an end of madness) generates itself in asides, evasions, discontinuities, endless bypaths: digressions upon digressions. Part way into the second partition, a discourse already appearing to exhaust its possibilities is trumped by a digression that pursues totality to new and giddier heights: the "Digression of Air", one of nine digressions so labelled by

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64. v. Fox, The Tangled Chain, pp. 237-42.

65. v. supra, pp. 223-24.

by Burton and one of the best known portions of his book.

In the "Digression of Air", the digressive movement of the entire Anatomy takes the form of intellectual roving through the entire cosmos, from hell to earth, to the regions of the atmosphere, up into the firmament, and finally to Godhead. Burton's survey of the state of knowledge about various questions of natural philosophy, preeminently of astronomy, is apparently connected to the rest of the Anatomy only through a witty play on the medical category of air (i.e. atmospheric conditions). Air was one of the six Galenic non-natural things and had been tied as early as Hippocrates to mental illness. The "rectification" of air provides Burton with the occasion to wing his way through the element of air and so explore the earth and heavens. Burton claims to leave his examination of the microcosm in order to chart the macrocosm, but he no more leaves the melancholy body in which (and on which) he dwells than he does his study or the page before him. He cannot digress from a subject that is universal or from a self that is not in possession of itself. He merely changes sets. The anatomy theatre becomes a planetarium. Instead of laying open his melancholy, Burton projects it onto a new sphere of knowledge, knowledge about God and the physical universe.

He begins:

> As a long-winged hawk, when he is first whistled off the fist, mounts aloft, and for his pleasure fetcheth many a circuit in the air, still soaring higher and higher till he come to his full pitch, and in the end when the game is sprung, comes

> down amain, and stoops upon a sudden: so will I, having now come at last into these ample fields of air, wherein I may freely expatiate and exercise myself for my recreation, awhile rove, wander round about the world, mount aloft to those ethereal orbs and celestial spheres, and so descend to my former elements again. (II, 34-35)

The movement of Burton's hawk is both upward and circular. Burton flies up to the point he has occupied since assuming the view-from-above in the preface and the position of the anatomist in the treatise proper. The universal perspective implicit throughout the Anatomy doubles back upon itself in the "Digression of Air", where the universe is itself the subject of inquiry. The enormous energy of its prose derives from this 'sqaring' of the universal, which is Burton's true element.

The Renaissance explores the cosmos, the Baroque libraries, Benjamin has written.[66] "I never travelled but in map or card" (18), said Burton, and he did not record looking through a telescope until his edition of 1638. He had, however, "ever been especially delighted with the study of cosmography" (18) and a connoisseur of its questions from the writing (or revision) of Philosophaster, which contains a long passage on current problems of astronomy. The object of the "Digression of Air's" study is not precisely the cosmos itself, but writing about the cosmos: cosmography. Burton's imagined physical journey is thus also a rhetorical one. Just as Burton's hawk spies places on the physical globe (the highest mountains, for example), Burton's pen visits places of invention, in the

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66. Walter Benjamin, The Origin of German Tragic Drama, trans. John Osborne, London, 1977, p. 140.

form of traditional points of interest about the cosmos, as in the following passage:

> Whether Mount Athos, Pelion, Olympus, Ossa, Caucasus, Atlas, be so high as Pliny, Solinus, Mela relate... or 78 miles perpendicularly high, as Jacob Mazonius, sec. 3 et 4, expounding that place of Aristotle about Caucasus... contends. (II, 37)

Digress as he will, Burton cannot escape from his own or others' books.

Just as the preface runs through the levels of animate being, the "Digression of Air" proceeds through the levels of the inanimate. In the preface, Burton systematically applies the epithet of madness to the world; in the "Digression of Air", he covers the world with questions.[67]

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67. A possible precedent for question-writing such as Burton's in the "Digression of Air" is the medieval collection of questions on natural philosophy called the Salernitan Questions (v. Brian Lawn, The Salernitan Questions, Oxford, 1963). Questions were often a starting point for academic debate. Burton quotes typical formulae for disputation or rhetorical exercise in a long passage in the "Digression of Air", of which the following is a portion:

> An bene philosophentur R. Bacon and J. Dee, aphorism. de multiplicatione specierum? Whether there be any such images ascending with each degree of the zodiac in the east, as Aliacensis feigns? An aqua super coelum? as Patricius and the schoolmen will... (II, 51)

Perhaps on the example of Burton, the collection of questions became linked to melancholy, as in William Cleland's poem "Hallo, My Fancy" (~~1650~~). The first stanza of this poem reads: See The Roxburghe Ballads, vol 6-2, ed. J. Woodfall Ebsworth, Hertford, 1887, pp. 450-57.

> In melancholic fancy,
> Out of myself,
> In the vulcan dancy,
> All the world surveying,
> Nowhere staying,
> Just like a fairy elf;
> Out o'er the tops of highest mountains skipping,

Cont/...

Like the world of the preface, the world composed by Burton's questions is a world upside down. Ignorance stands in for melancholy. Burton's God neither relieves his madness nor resolves his questions. The corollary of "when God sees his time, He will reveal these mysteries to mortal men" (II, 60) is that God has mystified the world. For his confidence that God knows, Burton pays the price of believing the truth inaccessible to mortals and present questioning vain.

> I would censure all Pliny's, Solinus', Strabo's, Sir John Mandeville's, Olaus Magnus', Marcus Polus' lies, correct those errors in navigation, reform cosmographical charts, and rectify longitudes, if it were possible. (II, 40)

Burton's reform of maps founders on the same phrase ("if it were possible") that undoes his Utopia. Errors in navigation are on a par with the madness of merchants and sailors. Failing to rectify knowledge and manners (and digressing from the rectification of air), Burton gathers errors and uncertainties to him, just as elsewhere he gathers cases of melancholy.

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67. Cont/-

> Out o'er the hills, the trees, the valleys tripping,
> Out o'er the ocean seas without an oar or shipping,
> Hallo, my fancy,
> Whither wilt thou go?

The remaining stanzas propose a series of questions, mostly concerned with geography, some of which Burton investigates. The only text of this poem I have been able to consult is to be found in Bryant's Treasury of Poetry and Song, ed. William Cullen Bryant, Boston, 1882, pp. 940-41.

The natural phenomena that Burton investigates are themselves fraught with instability. The variation of the compass, the vicissitudes of climate, the irregularity of ocean currents, the rise and fall of arts and sciences, are all manifestations of a cosmic principle of errancy. Of all the objects of his reconnaissance, the heavenly bodies most fascinate and bewilder him.[68]

> how comes, or wherefore is, this temeraria siderum dispositio, this rash placing of stars, or, as Epicurus will, fortuita, or accidental? Why are some big, some little? Why are they so confusedly, unequally site in the heavens, and set so much out of order? (II, 46)

The disorderly fabric of the heavens and the digressive movement of Burton's discourse are analagous. The fixed stars of Ptolemaic and Aristotelian astronomy, unfixed in Burton's lifetime by new observations and calculations, objectify the inconstancy of Burton's mind. Likewise, the infinite universe of Bruno, Kepler, and others (including Epicurus and Democritus), evoked on the opening page of "Democritus Jr. to the Reader"[69] serves as a mirror for the infinitude of Burton's discourse. Burton views the new astronomy with the same ambivalence with which he contemplates madness and melancholy. The Copernican universe offers a scene in which the claustrophobia of melancholy may be relieved (where the mind may "freely

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68. Burton's cosmology has been examined by Robert M. Browne, "Robert Burton and the New Cosmology", Modern Language Quarterly 13 (1952), 131-48; and by Richard G. Barlow, "Infinite Worlds: Robert Burton's Cosmic Voyage", Journal of the History of Ideas XXXIV (1973), 291-302. Browne's is by far the superior article.

69. v. supra, p. 231.

expatiate"), while at the same time it confirms man in his fears of insignificance in a universe out of human scale and perhaps fortuitous. In his subsection on self-love (a cause of melancholy), Burton dresses an ancient topos against self-importance in speculations afforded by the new cosmology.

> Quota pars, how small a part, in respect of the whole world, never so much as hears our names! how few take notice of us! ... And yet every man must and will be immortal, as he hopes, and extend his fame to our antipodes, whenas half, no, not a quarter, of his own province or city neither knows nor hears of him: but say they did, what's a city to a kingdom, a kingdom to Europe, Europe to the world, the world itself must have an end, if compared to the least visible star in the firmament, eighteen times bigger than it? and then if those stars be infinite, and every star there be a sun, as some will, and, as this sun of ours, hath his planets about him, all inhabited, what proportion bear we to them, and where's our glory? (I, 296)

If in one respect glory is prideful, in another it belongs to man (like immortality) as a guarantee of divine interest in him. Burton's confident moralizing staggers in reckonings of the infinite. Burton is anxious without glory, as he reveals elsewhere:

> But who shall dwell in these vast bodies, earths, worlds, "if they be inhabited? rational creatures?" as Kepler demands, "or have they souls to be saved? or do they inhabit a better part of the world than we do? Are we or they lords of the world? And how are all things made for man?" (II, 55)

If uneasy in the thought of a universe of aliens, Burton nevertheless glories in his unease and in the opportunity to project, if not also to validate his inner alienation in a cosmic arena. Each of the first six editions of the Anatomy contains some new reference to infinite worlds, but

Burton neither flatly endorses nor rejects the theory of their existence. His irresolution, however, is more infinite than belief in an infinite universe could ever be.

Study of the stars is at once a cause of melancholy and a cure for it. Curiosity is among the causes which Burton treats in his first partition, and among its unprofitable objects are the heavens.

> For what matter is it for us to know how high the Pleiades are, how far distant Perseus and Cassiopea from us, how deep the sea, etc.? ... Quod supra nos nihil ad nos. (I, 366)

In the second partition, however, curiosity about the stars and planets is commended as exercise of the mind.

> In all nature what is there so stupend as to examine and calculate the motion of the planets, their magnitudes, apogeums, perigeums, eccentricities, how far distant from the earth, the bigness, thickness, compass of the firmament, each star, with their diameters and circumference, apparent area, superficies? (II, 95)

When the stars are measured and numbered, in the "Digression of Air", these calculations themselves display the confusion of the motives that have prompted them. Burton examines:

> Whether the stars be of that bigness, distance, as astronomers relate, so many in number, 1026, or 1725, as J. Bayerus; or as some rabbins, 29,000 myriads; or as Galileo discovers by his glasses, infinite, and that via lactea a confused light of small stars, like so many nails in a door? (II, 51)

"Finitum de infinito non potest statuere" (I, 180). The mind in its feebleness can apprehend the infinite heavens only by likening them to a homely material object that

perhaps lies in view of the writer at his desk. Yet the mind's limits are also the means to its ironic triumph over the remoteness and inhumanity of the stars. The infinite is susceptible to the mind's least effort at analogy. The suprahuman is made familiar and tractable by a simple figure of speech; the limitless is domesticated and drawn into the compass of the writer's or reader's study. Not Burton's simile of door and doornails alone transforms the sidereal infinity; the other elements in the sentence in which the infinite occurs as one among several calculations do likewise. Each of the other possibilities, moreover, is itself infinite and mock-infinite together. Each of the other numbers (1026, 1725, 29,000 myriads) is exact but unstable; each is too random to mean anything, and each is relativised (laughed at) by the others. Has J. Bayerus determined two different numbers or is 1026 owed to no authority? This concrete but floating number consorts with the determinations of rabbinical scholarship and ocular observation, subverting their arrogation of certainty. Burton's numbers belong to the world upside down.[70] They exhibit the melancholy and madness of the authors who have arrived at them.

As with numbers, so with astronomers and their world

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70. The excellent discussions of the comedy of numbers in Rabelais by Bakhtin (Rabelais and His World, pp. 463-65) and of the passion for numbers in Fourier by Barthes (Roland Barthes, Sade/Fourier/Loyola, trans. Richard Miller, New York, 1976, pp. 102-06) are both germane to Burton's use of numbers in the Anatomy.

systems. Burton oversees a cosmos in chaos:

> The world is tossed in a blanket amongst them, they hoist the earth up and down like a ball, make it stand and go at their pleasures: one saith the sun stands, another he moves; a third comes in, taking them all at rebound, and, lest there should any paradox be found wanting, he finds certain spots and clouds in the sun ... Thus they disagree amongst themselves, old and new, irreconcilable in their opinions; thus Albateginus, thus Alfraganus, thus Tycho, thus Ramerus, thus Roeslinus, thus Fracastorius, thus Copernicus and his adherents, thus Clavius and Maginus, etc., with their followers, vary and determine of these celestial orbs and bodies: and so, whilst these men contend about the sun and moon, like the philosophers in Lucian, it is to be feared the sun and moon will hide themselves, and be as much offended as she was with those, and send another message to Jupiter, by some new-fangled Icaromenippus, to make an end of all those curious controversies, and scatter them abroad. (II, 57-58)

What Burton's authors do to the world, he does to them, like a puppeteer. The tumult of their opinions can be rehearsed, but not contained from within. It can only be viewed from above, with Menippus, where it appears under the aspect of children's games at a playground. To make an end, Burton rises up and wishes to see his authors scattered abroad. This end, however, rejoins its beginning, since the scattered state of knowledge first invites Burton to explore the world. Roving, circling, surveying, awaiting the stroke of Jupiter or the revelation of God, Burton stoops at last to a point on another circle, his course of dietetic cures.

Exercise Rectified

> To this end I write, like them, saith Lucian, that "recite to trees, and declaim to pillars for want of auditors": as Paulus Aegineta ingenuously confesseth, "not that anything was unknown or omitted, but to exercise myself." (21)

We have already noticed[71] the logical shortcomings of this line of reasoning, and Burton himself is obviously aware of the absurdity of "declaiming to pillars". He is undeterred, however, by the idleness of the exercise which produces his book. Burton's writing on melancholy to be busy to avoid melancholy may be taken as a parody of the fashionable melancholic's passive self-absorption. Burton's melancholizing is all action. Burton continually attempts to externalize his condition, to find objects correspondent to his inward passion. No significance inheres in the objects themselves, but only in the dramatization of their relation to a melancholy subject. In "The Author's Abstract of Melancholy", for example, the imagination creates out of itself shifting scenes of the blandishments and torments of melancholy.

> Methinks I hear, methinks I see,
> Sweet music, wondrous melody,
> Towns, palaces, and cities fine;
> Here now, then there; the world is mine,
> Rare beauties, gallant ladies shine,
> Whate'er is lovely or divine.
> All other joys to this are folly,
> None so sweet as melancholy.

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71. supra, pp. 222-23.

> Methinks I hear, methinks I see,
> Ghosts, goblins, fiends; my phantasy
> Presents a thousand ugly shapes,
> Headless bears, black men, and apes,
> Doleful outcries, and fearful sights,
> My sad and dismal soul affrights.
> All my griefs to this are jolly,
> None so damn'd as melancholy. (11-12)

Melancholy does not reside in either exaltation or depression ("for pleasure or for pain, 'tis all one"), but in the ceaseless vicissitude of these states of mind, neither of which is sane. Burton and his fellow melancholics are hurried back and forth between pipedreams and nightmares, between Utopia and anarchy, praise and blame, the wish and its frustration. The melancholic's mind is in constant dialogue with itself; Burton himself subscribed the word Διαλογικῶς beneath his poem's title. To act out this dialogue, to exercise its possibilities in every scene of experience and knowledge, is the antidote to inner alienation that Burton adopts. Asked why he travels armed in so peaceful a country, Don Quixote replies:

> The exercise of my profession does not allow or permit me to ride in any other fashion. Ease, luxury, and repose were invented for soft courtiers; but labor, unease, and arms alone were designed and made for those whom the world calls knights errant, of whose number, though unworthy, I am the very least.[72]

Like Don Quixote's, Burton's calling is more important to him than the attainment of any goal or purpose. He seeks labours and adventures in order to play out his inner travails, in order to serve his "mistress Melancholy" (21).

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72. Don Quixote, trans. J.M. Cohen, London, 1959, p. 154.

Exercise is the wisdom of the world upside down. Dr. Johnson often quoted the Anatomy's parting advice: "Be not solitary, be not idle" (III, 431). The end of Burton's book counsels the reader's return to its river-run of (foolish, idle) business and to the company of the rest of (melancholy, mad) humanity. At least in this instance, Burton took his own advice. Inside the oval of his portrait on the Anatomy's title page, he is shown holding his book. "I writ therefore, and busied myself in this playing labour" (20).

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Sterne

Why, it may be asked, if the Anatomy of Melancholy really is a Menippean satire, has it only recently and fitfully been recognized as such? Habent sua fata libelli. Between 1676 and 1800 the Anatomy was not reprinted. Its science outmoded, Burton's folio had become a book known chiefly to antiquarians, scholars, Sterne, and Dr. Johnson. The turn in its fortunes in the late eighteenth century can be pinpointed. The necessity for a new edition was attributed by its publisher to interest created by the exposure (in 1793) of Sterne's "plagiarisms" in Tristram Shandy. By his borrowings from it, Sterne became the agent by which the Anatomy was historically introduced into the forum of literature. Although Sterne refers neither to Burton nor to the Anatomy in his writings and letters, he has left behind a reading of it in the form of the use to which he put it in Tristram Shandy: he made it one of the numerous precursors of his own seriocomic book. Sterne's reading of the Anatomy, I believe, corroborates the interpretation of Burton's work that I have presented in the foregoing chapters. In fact, by developing a certain literary tradition, Tristram Shandy actually helps construct the meanings of Burton's Anatomy for the modern reader.

Sterne's use of Burton was first (and very ably) documented by Dr. John Ferriar in his "Comments on Sterne" of 1793 (twice revised, in 1798 and 1812, as Illustrations of Sterne) and has been studied by several scholars since, most recently and extensively by Heather Jackson.[1] Although Sterne's borrowings (to the number of 36) have been carefully recorded and his modifications of source passages in the Anatomy have been described, the nature of Tristram Shandy's relation to Burton's book has yet to be rightly conceived.

Scholarly reluctance to compare the Anatomy and Tristram Shandy as Menippean satires has proceeded not only from misunderstanding of Burton's work, but, to a lesser degree, of Sterne's also. When Tristram Shandy is considered a "comic novel" instead of a Menippean satire, its generic ties to satires such as Burton's, in which the narrative element is minimal or subsumed in exposition, tends to be discounted. Furthermore, as long as satire is considered "perhaps too strong to be applied to his amiable foolery",[2] the philosophical scope of Sterne's satire (and the satirical scope

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1. In addition to Ferriar's writings, the following studies also assess Sterne's relation to Burton: Henri Fluchère, Laurence Sterne, de l'homme à l'oeuvre, Paris, 1961, pp. 372-78; J.M. Stedmond, The Comic Art of Laurence Sterne, Toronto, 1967, pp. 165-71; Heather Joanna Jackson, "The Anatomy of Melancholy in England, 1750-1800", diss. Toronto, 1973, and by the same author, "Sterne, Burton, and Ferriar: Allusions to the Anatomy of Melancholy in Volumes Five to Nine of Tristram Shandy", Philological Quarterly 54 (1975), 457-70.

2. James A. Work, introduction to Tristram Shandy, New York, 1940, lxv.

of his philosophy) will also be reduced. The judgment of Diderot (himself a Menippean author) has not been bettered; of Tristram Shandy he wrote to Sophie Volland, "Il est impossible de vous en donner une autre idée que celle d'une satyre universelle".[3] Sterne has assembled the pedigree of Menippean satire in the pages of Tristram Shandy. He cultivated the genre with a hobbyist's zeal. Ferriar's "illustration" of his sources makes a useful scholarly survey of the classical and Renaissance literature of learned wit.

Ferriar maintained that Burton "had considerable influence" on Sterne's style ,[4] but direct influence of any kind can be ascertained only in the fifth and following volumes of Tristram Shandy, in which all the quotations from the Anatomy occur. It is not known when Sterne came into possession of the copy of the 1652 edition of the Anatomy which was included in the sale catalogue of his library after his death (price: ls. 6d). The common literary tradition in which both Burton and Sterne wrote could in itself account for the parallels between their styles and between other aspects of their works. Since the Anatomy has not generally been recognized as part of this tradition, however, Sterne has been seen merely to pillage it (along with many lesser authors) or else to borrow at cross-purposes from his learned source.

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3. Quoted by L.P. Curtis, ed., Letters of Laurence Sterne, Oxford, 1935, p. 168.

4. John Ferriar, Illustrations of Sterne, London, 1812, p.127.

Heather Jackson, for example, emphasizes the incongruity of the Anatomy's absorption into Tristram Shandy. She states that Sterne was "the first writer of fiction to see comic potential in Burton's very serious moral and medical work",[5] She locates the "comic potential" of the Anatomy only in Sterne's travesty of its "grave pedantry".[6] The borrowings he made from Burton, she says, "he audaciously applied... to his own quite different book".[7] When Jackson supposes that "Sterne evidently found Burton 'Laugh-at-able'",[8] she overlooks the likelihood that Sterne may have been laughing with, not just at an author who called himself Democritus Jr. She rightly explains as an allusion to the Anatomy of Melancholy (in particular as a sly acknowledgement by Sterne of his borrowings from it) one of the two epigraphs to volume V of Tristram Shandy:

> - Si quis calumnietur levius esse quam decet theologum, aut mordacius quam deceat Christianum - non Ego, sed Democritus dixit. -
>
> ERASMUS.

Yet, quoting Osler, she persists in regarding the Anatomy as a uniformly serious work and Sterne's use of it in Tristram Shandy deliberately "indecorous". Thus, with reference to

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5. H. J. Jackson, "Burton, Sterne, and Ferriar", p. 460.
6. ibid., p. 465.
7. ibid., p. 460.
8. ibid., p. 465.

three of Sterne's reworkings of Burton:

> Burton's consolation upon death is moving, but Walter Shandy's is absurd; Burton's learning is impressive, but Tristram's is feeble and misapplied; Burton's moral system is consistent and compelling, but Toby's, however generous in impulse, is patently illogical.[9]

Jackson argues (not always convincingly) that Sterne expected his readers to recognize the Anatomy as the source of these passages and to laugh at the disparity between "the original and acquired signification of Burton's words".[10] Whether Sterne's jokes were intended for the public's, the author's, or John Hall-Stevenson's amusement, the effect of burlesque or incongruity in these and most of the other passages adapted from Burton can be felt without reference to the Anatomy. Furthermore, as we have repeatedly seen, the burlesque is present in Burton also. Sterne heightens, not "inverts" Burton's effects, as Jackson argues. He parodies what is itself already a parody. Sterne substitutes his own voice for that of Burton's antic. He plays the Macaroni to Burton's grave other half, as he had to Thomas Bridges as the quack doctor in the painting they jointly executed in 1759.[11]

The first of Sterne's borrowings to follow the epigraphs to volume V sets the pattern for most of the others. It concerns borrowing itself. Burton had written of book-making that:

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9. ibid.

10. ibid., p. 466.

11. v. supra, p.245.

> As apothecaries we make new mixtures every day, pour out of one vessel into another; ... We weave the same web still, twist the same rope again and again. (23-24)

Sterne wrote:

> Tell me, ye learned, shall we for ever be adding so much to the bulk -- so little to the stock?
> Shall we for ever make new books, as apothecaries make new mixtures, by pouring only out of one vessel into another?
> Are we for ever to be twisting, and untwisting the same rope? for ever in the same track -- for ever at the same pace?[12]

Sterne goes on to imitate (and exaggerate) Burton's opening paragraphs on man's excellency and fall, as we have seen. Sterne's irony might be inferred from his too sudden metamorphosis from a plunderer of Rabelais and other writers to a denouncer of plunderers. It can be more fully appreciated, however, if it is recognized that his censure of literary apothecaries and rope-twisters is taken from Burton. Sterne is not merely picking the pockets of a discourse against theft. His irony too is borrowed; he has stepped into Burton's suit of clothes, pockets and all. Burton quotes the words of Cardan, Scaliger, and a score of other authors in his complaint against re-weavers of words. Moreover, as Edward Bensly pointed out, his simile of the apothecary is stolen without acknowledgment from J.V. Andreae's Menippus.[13] Burton leaves it to the reader whether to take the irony of his patchwork discussion as authorial

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12. Tristram Shandy, ed. Work, pp. 342-43.

13. v. J.V. Andreae, Menippus sive Dialogorum Centuria, Cosmopoli, 1618, p. 57.

leg-pulling or as an inevitable circumstance of writing. Sterne simply twists the rope of an irony present in Burton, making it cry out to the reader in his adaptation.

The perspective afforded by the distance of one and a half (or three and a half) centuries reveals nothing essentially new in Burton's text but throws certain of its literary aspects into relief. The Anatomy may be said to have undergone a latency period that ended with the publication of the fifth volume of Tristram Shandy. By 1762 the Anatomy had become big with jests that Sterne had the wit to deliver. "I had often wondered", wrote Ferriar, "at the pains bestowed by Sterne in ridiculing opinions not fashionable in his time, and had thought it singular, that he should produce the portrait of his sophist, Mr. Shandy, with all the stains and mouldiness of the last century about him".[14] Ferriar conjectured that Walter Shandy was "a personification of the authorship of Burton" drawn from Sterne's perusal of the Anatomy. Whether or not Ferriar is right (it seems unlikely), he correctly registers the historical source ("the last century") of Sterne's quotation of the character of Walter Shandy. The "stains and mouldiness" that Ferriar attaches to the seventeenth century are precisely the attributes of old books, such as surviving copies of Burton's neglected tome. No more than Mr. Shandy is Burton merely the butt of

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14. Ferriar, Illustrations of Sterne, p. 83.

Sterne's jokes, however, as the very needlessness of Sterne's ridicule of antiquated learning, remarked by Ferriar, suggests. D.W. Jefferson has observed, with reference to Tristram Shandy, that:

> It is not enough to argue that the comic use of old-fashioned ideas or ratiocinative techniques is merely a symptom of satirical reaction against them. That they should have been matter for comedy is a sign that they were not dead. To be matter for comedy they had to be matter for the imagination.[15]

The decay of Burton's kind of learning was the means by which the Anatomy was enabled to live again as fiction. Its appeal to the imagination could be better felt when its immediate historical context had disappeared. Tristram Shandy highlights peculiarities in Burton's text once disguised by the surroundings of the early seventeenth century. For example, the underlying comedy of Burton's galleries of long, Latinate surnames (Bredenbachius, Busbequius, Fracastorius, etc.) emerges beside the portentous cognomens of Sterne's pedants (Slawkenbergius, Scroderus, Phutatorius). Sterne's names are invented; Burton's are not, except of course in the sense that he has invented them by finding and quoting them. Burton was the more patient humorist. Sterne's ornamenta ambitiosa (as he called them) bring out Burton's play with technical jargon and the hyperbolism of his often superfluous erudition. Sterne's "style from despair" (in Empson's

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15. D.W. Jefferson, "Tristram Shandy and the Tradition of Learned Wit", Essays in Criticism I (1951), 225-48, p. 227.

phrase) sharpens our awareness of the distraction that impels Burton's prose.

The twentieth century as well as the eighteenth offers lights (other than those of scholarship) on Burton's Anatomy. Charlie Chaplin named it as one of the books he read over and over again.[16] An unidentified "comedy acrobat" from Brooklyn had first recommended the Anatomy to him.[17] The book traditionally beloved of bookworms is evidently also the favourite of clowns and antics.

Among the character of modern fiction, the figure of Samuel Beckett's Malone, on his death bed drawing up an inventory of his possessions and entering stories in his exercise book, strongly recalls Burton's melancholy scholar of himself. In the headnote to Krapp's Last Tape, Beckett describes the play's only character as "a wearish old man". The word 'wearish' ('feeble') is sufficiently unusual to suggest that Beckett may be recollecting Burton's description of Democritus of Abdera near the opening of the Anatomy: "Democritus... was a little wearish old man, very melancholy by nature, averse from company in his latter days, and much given to solitariness" (16). Recollection or not, Beckett writes in the same language of European satire as its earlier adept, Burton.

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16. Charles Chaplin, My Autobiography, New York, 1964, p.227.

17. Ibid.

"...editum librum continuo mirari homines" (29)

In an age of anxiety, when Beckett is popular, endogenous vital depression widespread, and analysts everywhere, it is not surprising that Burton should be in request. The Anatomy of Melancholy has been reissued three times in the last six years. Each new printing is "suddenly gone, eagerly read" (29), as Burton boasted of the first three. Eighty years ago, T.E. Brown predicted neglect and decay for a book he loved to see only, he said, embalmed in dust.[18] This year, a paperback edition (unabridged) is out in America, and the Anatomy's fantastical title page, reproduced from the edition of 1628 in gaudy colours on the cover, beckons from displays in bookshops once again.[19] In ruff and doublet, Democritus Jr. observes the world from coffee-tables and night-stands and again holds out his book to it. Do his readers know what they are reading? I cannot answer for all, but have answered, at length, for myself.

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18. T.E. Brown, "Robert Burton, a Causerie", New Review XIII (1895), 257-66, p. 266.

19. This edition (Viking Books, New York) is a reprint of the Everyman Anatomy (1932), edited by Holbrook Jackson.

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